

Newsletter

tel: 01923 777450

e-mail: dentist@thedentalcentre.org

Issue 43, Winter 2012

Welcome to the 43rd Rickmansworth Dental Centre Newsletter. Thank you for your positive feedback on previous issues. If you have any comments on our newsletter or anything you would like to see in it, please let us know.



Practice News

Welcome to our Winter 2012 Newsletter. We hope you are having a good start to 2012 and managing to avoid the many different bugs and nasties that appear to be around at the moment.



Unfortunately our main news this issue is a burst pipe and flood at the practice. More details of that below.

14th March is No Smoking Day. More details on quitting smoking can be found at www.taketheleap.co.uk.

Some interesting facts that were found while preparing this newsletter:

- On 20th September the Chinese celebrate the public holiday of "Love Your Dentist Day".

- In 1881 Alfred P. Southwick invented the electric chair. He was a dentist! Why does that last fact not surprise anyone?

Remember, if there is anything you would like to see at the practice or if there is any way we can make your visit more pleasant, please let us know and we will try to oblige.

Flood



During the very cold snap in February, we had a pipe freeze and burst over a weekend. Adam then had the wonderful surprise of opening up on Monday morning and being faced with a cascade of water coming through the reception ceiling. There was quite a lot of damage, especially to the electrical equipment and to Pam's nerves! Fortunately most of the damage has been sorted out (including that to Pam's nerves), so hopefully there will not be too much disruption on your next visit to The Dental Centre.

Apologies if your appointment had to be cancelled or re-arranged at short notice, because of the flood.

Dental Hygienists

Kate is here at the practice, all day Monday and Thursday, helping patients keep their teeth and gums healthy. She now also does occasional Wednesdays. We can inform you of these when booking an appointment.



Our second hygienist is here one Saturday morning a month.

If you wish to book a session with the hygienist at the same time you have your routine visit with Adam, just let Pam know. There is information about hygienists and what they do on the back of this newsletter.

Thank You

Adam and all the staff at The Dental Centre would like to thank everyone for their cards, presents and good wishes over the festive period. We would like to take this opportunity to wish you a belated happy and healthy New Year.



Snoring

Adam recently attended a course on snoring and sleep disorders. This is of importance to a dentist as one of the most effective ways of treating snoring is with the use of a custom made device provided by the dentist. The 'Sleepwell' device works by holding the bottom jaw in a



slightly forward position. This action is similar to doing a chin lift in 'First Aid', by holding the bottom jaw forward by just a few millimetres. This allows the tongue to move forward and opens the airway significantly. By allowing the passage of air more freely, snoring is reduced.

Snoring is a major problem for many people (and their partners). The Sleepwell device has undergone many clinical studies and been shown to be extremely effective in reducing snoring. If you would like further information on it, please do not hesitate to contact us at The Dental Centre

Football Update

The Rickmansworth Dental Centre is the proud to sponsor the Under 14's Radlett squad in the Excel Sunday League. They've had a fantastic unbeaten second half of the season and, nearing the end of the season, they could finish in the top three in the league. Not sure if this would mean Champions League football next season, must check the league rules. Final season update next newsletter.



Focus On Diet & Teeth

Diet plays a significant role in both dental caries (cavities or tooth decay) and dental erosion (loss of tooth surface from acid attack). Good nutrition prevents many dental problems and is important from the outset. From good nutrition during pregnancy to breastfeeding in infancy, a balanced diet throughout childhood and adulthood is as good for the teeth as it is for general health.



The modern UK diet contains a mix of sugars and other carbohydrates that can be fermented in the mouth by oral bacteria

to produce acid. Research has shown that people in countries that eat more sugar have significantly higher levels of caries. Studies also show that when people ate less sugar, for example during World War II, there was also a reduction in dental caries.

Both total sugar intake and the frequency with which it's eaten are factors. Small amounts of sugar consumed frequently over a period of time will cause more damage than the same quantity consumed on a single occasion. Constant sugar nibbling encourages continuous demineralisation and the saliva doesn't have time to neutralise the acids. Sticky or chewy foods that remain in the mouth longer also cause more damage as the bacteria have more time to produce the acid.

Milk and cheese and dental health

Cows' milk contains the sugar lactose - the least cariogenic (decay-causing) sugar. Milk on its own doesn't promote caries and this has been attributed to the presence of protective factors: calcium, phosphate, and the milk protein casein.

Cheese protects against dental caries, partly because eating cheese causes more saliva to flow and neutralise acids, and partly because the cheese increases calcium concentration in the plaque stopping demineralisation. The fat in cheese also reduces the amount of bacteria on the surface of the teeth. So a small lump of cheese eaten after a meal or sugary/acidic drink, will help protect tooth enamel.

Tea and dental health

There has been some research that shows that tea may fight tooth decay. Tea contains polyphenols, which suppress the growth of bacteria in teeth. However, tea also contains fluoride so it's unclear whether the protective effect is due to the fluoride or the polyphenols, or both and whether it's the milk added to tea that adds to the protective effect.

Fluoride and dental health

Fluoride undoubtedly protects against dental caries and in the UK, regular use of fluoride toothpaste has contributed to improved dental health. Fluoride makes tooth enamel harder and more resistant to acid attack. It also affects plaque by reducing acid production. Fluoride occurs naturally in water in some parts of the UK and is sometimes added in fluoridation schemes.

Chocolate and dental health

Milk chocolate contains calcium and casein that help protect teeth as milk would. There's a protective factor in cocoa itself, but these protective factors are unlikely to override the detrimental effect on teeth of the high sugar content.

Tips for teeth

As well as correct brushing and flossing and regular dental checks, the following dietary measures can help minimise tooth decay and erosion:

- Eat sugary foods less often, particularly those of a sticky or chewable nature. Remember that dried fruits can provide sugar and a sticky surface on teeth that encourage bacterial growth and acid production. Many processed foods have sugar in them, and the higher up it appears in the list of ingredients, the more sugar there is in the product. Always read the list of ingredients on the labels when you are food shopping. When you are reading the labels remember that 'no added sugar' does not necessarily mean that the product is sugar free. It simply means that no extra sugar has been added. These products may contain sugars such as those listed above, or the sugars may be listed as 'carbohydrates'.
- Limit snacking of any foods, and therefore the amount of time your teeth are exposed to a bacteria-friendly environment. Choose raw vegetables, wholemeal bread, unsweetened yoghurt or cheese as snacks.
- Avoid sugary or acidic drinks between meals. Water or milk are the best options. It is better for your teeth if you drink fruit juices at meal times. If you are drinking them between meals, try diluting them with water. Diluted sugar-free squashes are the safest alternative to water and milk. If you make squash or cordial, be sure that the drink is diluted 1 part cordial to 10 parts water. Drink through a straw. Liquids sucked through a straw have less contact with teeth and are less damaging than those consumed from a glass.
- If you do have sweets, eat them all at once. Avoid 'grazing' over extended periods. For example have a whole chocolate bar in one go rather than constantly dipping in to a bag of sweets.
- End a meal with milk or cheese to help neutralise the acid. Leave a gap of one to two hours each time you eat or drink to allow remineralisation to occur.
- It is important that you brush twice a day with a toothpaste containing fluoride. The best times are before breakfast and last thing at night before you go to bed. Don't have anything except water after you've brushed your teeth at night – less saliva is produced at night.
- Don't brush your teeth immediately after eating acidic foods or drinks. If teeth are brushed when in a demineralised state, a layer of tooth enamel or dentine may also be removed.
- Chew sugar-free gum after a meal to help produce more saliva to neutralise the acid

Visiting the Dental Hygienist

At The Dental Centre we have two dental hygienists. Kate is here on Mondays, Thursdays and some Wednesdays. Our other hygienist works here one Saturday morning a month.

Listed below are a few of the most frequently asked questions about hygienists and what a visit to the hygienist involves.

What is a hygienist?

Dental hygienists are specially trained to work with the dentist in providing care tailored to the patients' needs.

They play an important role in dental health care and are mainly concerned with gum health, education in correct home care and the application of preventive materials to the teeth and gums.

The hygienist provides professional cleaning of the teeth for the patient. Most importantly they educate the patient in the best way to keep the teeth free of plaque.

Why is this treatment important?

Regular professional cleaning combined with your home care will help maintain a healthy mouth. A clean and healthy mouth will improve your appearance, help you keep your teeth and give you fresh breath.

Can a hygienist help prevent dental disease?

The training of the hygienist is centred on preventing dental disease. Carefully removing the deposits that build up on the teeth and teaching you how to prevent it reforming again, will go a long way to slowing the progress of gum disease. Anti-bacterial gels and solutions can be applied under the gum to kill the bacteria causing gum disease. By discussing your diet and recommending other preventive measures your decay rate can also be reduced.

Children can benefit from having their teeth polished. The hygienist can also apply fluoride gels and solutions to help prevent decay. The permanent back teeth can also benefit from having the fissures sealed.

Why doesn't the dentist do this work?

Dr. Deitsch can carry out this type of work. However, the hygienist has also been specially trained to carry out scaling and polishing and can spend longer with you. They are also expert at teaching you how to look after your teeth and gums. Often the hygienist will spend a number of appointments getting the gums healthy ready for the dentist to do the more complex treatment.

Will the treatment hurt?

Scaling and polishing is usually pain-free. However, if you do experience some discomfort the hygienist can eliminate this with the use of topical anaesthetic creams or by giving you some local anaesthetic. It is important that you let the hygienist know at the time so that some pain control can be given.

What can I do to help the Hygienist?

You can do a great deal to help yourself and the hygienist as you are in control of your mouth between visits to the practice.

The hygienist will have shown you how to remove plaque with a toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste. You will also have been shown how to clean between your teeth with floss, tape or little brushes. There are many products now available and the hygienist will recommend those that are appropriate for you.

Do I need to see the hygienist?

Following your routine examination Dr. Deitsch will advise you if you require a visit to the hygienist. If you feel you wish to see the hygienist anyway, please contact the surgery and this can be arranged for you.

If you have any queries or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Hope you have a cosy Winter

With Best Wishes from Adam Deitsch and all the staff at The Dental Centre.

Don't forget you can find us online at www.thedentalcentre.org

