



The Rickmansworth Dental Centre Newsletter

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Welcome to the 44th 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 Spring 2012 Newsletter. Fortunately a quiet few weeks since our last newsletter. No more floods in the practice, just those outside with all the rain we've been having. It was bound to happen after a hosepipe ban was announced! National Smile Month is fast approaching. More details of that below. 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



National Smile Month

National Smile Month is an oral health campaign like no other! Occurring annually the campaign promotes three key messages, all of which go a long way to improve oral health in the UK. They are:



-  Brush your teeth for two minutes twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste;
-  Cut down on how often you have sugary foods and drinks;
-  Visit your dentist regularly, as often as they recommend.

Organised by the UK's leading oral health charity, the British Dental Health Foundation, National Smile Month will take place between May 20 and June 20 in 2012.



National Smile Month 2012 is all about having fun and getting people excited in their oral health. There aren't many facial expressions as powerful as a smile and by looking after our teeth we can feel great and be more confident.

Turn Off The Tap



Turn off the Tap, it's a small action but it can lead to huge water savings. That's why the Save Water Save Money campaign has joined forces with 10 of the UK's Water Companies during National Smile Month (see above) to promote the Turn Off the Tap message. When you brush your teeth, turn the tap off. This can save as much as six litres of water a minute – which is about 24 litres of water a day – that's **168 litres of water a week!** A bath typically uses around 80 litres.



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.



Football

As we announced in our previous newsletters, The Rickmansworth Dental Centre is the proud sponsor of the Under 14's Radlett Squad in the Excel Sunday League. The season has now ended with the boys finishing a fantastic 3rd in the league (missing out on 2nd place by 1 point). In the end of season cup competition, they triumphed, winning the trophy 3-0 in one of their best displays of the season. That makes it 3 years in a row they have won the trophy!



The King's Crown

A Canadian dentist has recently made the winning bid on a porcelain crown of Elvis Presley. The affectionately named "Kings Crown" sold for £5,200 (US\$8,150) and added to the dentist's collection of celebrity dental memorabilia, in which he already had a tooth from John Lennon he bought last year from the same auction house (See our Newsletter Issue 42).



Dr Michael Zuk, a general dentist from Red Deer, Alberta (Canada), purchased the crown together with a model of Elvis Presley's teeth made for the rock-and-roll star by his former dentist, Henry Weiss, in Memphis. The crown was accompanied by five documents confirming its authenticity, including a letter from Presley's tour manager Joe Esposito.



Weiss practised dentistry in Memphis for 57 years until he died in December 1990. He was Presley's dentist until 1971, and prepared the porcelain crown and always kept an extra copy of the crown. When Elvis cracked his crown on a microphone during a performance, Weiss's son, S. Lewis Weiss, flew the replacement crown to Las Vegas.

Focus On Sensitive Teeth

What are sensitive teeth?

Having sensitive teeth can mean anything from getting a mild twinge to having severe discomfort that can continue for several hours. It can also be an early warning sign of more serious dental problems.

Who suffers from sensitive teeth?

Many people suffer from sensitive teeth and it can start at any time. It is more common in people aged between 20 and 40, although it can affect people in their early teens and when they are over 70. Women are more likely to be affected than men.

What causes sensitive teeth?

The part of the tooth we can see is covered by a layer of enamel that protects the softer dentine underneath. If the dentine is exposed, a tooth can become sensitive. This usually happens where the tooth and the gum meet and the enamel layer is much thinner. Here are some causes of sensitivity:

Toothbrush abrasion – brushing too hard, and brushing from side to side, can cause dentine to be worn away, particularly where the teeth meet the gums. The freshly exposed dentine may then become sensitive.

Dental erosion – this is loss of tooth enamel caused by attacks of acid from acidic food and drinks. If enamel is worn away the dentine underneath is exposed, which may lead to sensitivity.

Gum recession – gums may naturally recede (shrink back), and the roots will become exposed. Root surfaces do not have an enamel layer to protect them and can be more sensitive.

Gum disease – a build-up of plaque or tartar can cause the gum to recede down the tooth and even destroy the bony support of the tooth. Pockets can form in the gums around the tooth, making the area difficult to keep clean and the problem worse

Tooth grinding – this is a habit which involves clenching and grinding the teeth together. This can cause the enamel of the teeth to be worn away, making the teeth sensitive.

A cracked tooth or filling – a cracked tooth is one that has become broken. A crack can run from the biting surface of a tooth down towards the root. Extreme temperatures, especially cold, may cause discomfort.

Tooth bleaching – some patients have sensitivity for a short time during or after having their teeth bleached.



When are teeth more likely to be sensitive?

You are more likely to feel the sensitivity when drinking or eating something cold, from cold air catching your teeth, and sometimes with hot foods or drinks. Some people have sensitivity when they have sweet or acidic food and drink. The pain can come and go, with some times being worse than others.

Is there anything I can do to treat sensitive teeth at home?

There are many brands of toothpaste on the market made to help ease the pain of sensitive teeth. The toothpaste should be used twice a day to brush your teeth. It can also be rubbed onto the sensitive areas. These toothpastes can take anything from a few days to several weeks to take effect. We can advise you on which type of toothpaste would be best for you.

Is there anything I should avoid if I have sensitive teeth?

You may find that hot, cold, sweet or acidic drinks or foods like ice cream can bring on sensitivity, so you may want to avoid these. If you have sensitivity when brushing your teeth with cold water from the tap, you may need to use warm water instead. It is important you do not avoid brushing your teeth regularly as this could make the problem worse.

Do I need to go and see the dentist?

Yes, if you have tried treating your sensitive teeth for a few weeks and have had no improvement or if the problem is getting worse.

What treatments can the dentist offer?

During an examination Adam will talk to you about your symptoms. He will look at your teeth to find out what is causing the sensitivity and to find the best way of treating it. We may treat the affected teeth with special de-sensitising products to help relieve the symptoms. Fluoride gels, rinses or varnishes can be applied to sensitive teeth. Sensitivity can take some time to settle. If this still does not help, your dentist may seal or fill around the neck of the tooth, where the tooth and gum meet, to cover exposed dentine. In very serious cases it may be necessary to remove the nerve and root-fill the tooth.

How can I prevent sensitive teeth?

Brush your teeth twice a day for two minutes with fluoride toothpaste. Use small circular movements with a soft- to medium-bristled brush. Try to avoid brushing your teeth from side to side. Change your toothbrush every two to three months or sooner if it becomes worn. Have sugary foods and fizzy and acidic drinks less often. Try to have them only at mealtimes. If you grind your teeth, talk to us about the possibility of having a mouthguard made to wear at night when most of the damage occurs. Also visit The Dental Centre for regular check-ups.

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 lovely Spring.
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*

