

# The Rickmansworth Dental Centre Newsletter

tel: 01923 777450

e-mail: [dentist@thedentalcentre.org](mailto:dentist@thedentalcentre.org)

Issue 46, Autumn 2012

Welcome to the 46<sup>th</sup> 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 Autumn 2012 Newsletter. We hope you had a great summer, enjoying the Jubilee and sporting celebrations.

November is Mouth Cancer Action Month. More about that later in the newsletter. It is very poignant as TV star Larry Hagman has recently died from tongue cancer. **Remember: If in doubt, get checked out!**

With the holiday period approaching, we have included an article on dental emergencies. Hopefully something you will not need, but always useful to have.

Finally, a big welcome to Julita. She has replaced Donna as our Saturday morning hygienist. She has already done a few sessions so far and patient feedback has been very good.

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.

## Christmas Opening

Please contact The Dental Centre for confirmation of our opening times during the Christmas and New Year period.

Rest assured that if we are closed and you are having problems, there is an emergency service available. The emergency out-of-hours telephone number is **03000 33 32 24**. This is part of the Herts. Urgent Dental Care Service. Details can be found on the practice answerphone or online at [www.thedentalcentre.org](http://www.thedentalcentre.org). Hopefully you will not have any problems, but we have included an article on dental emergencies later in this newsletter and our website has a section on dental emergencies, which you might find useful.

## Grin and Bear It!

A polar bear at a Scottish wildlife park has had root canal treatment on a rotten tooth.

A team of vets spent three hours working on Arktos, who weighs 75 stones (477 kg). Broken or infected teeth can lead to the death of a polar bear.

Arktos is trained to open his mouth for his keeper so his teeth can be examined on a regular basis. Arktos' subdued behaviour alerted staff to a problem with his upper left canine tooth. After he was darted and sedated, he was placed on an operating table constructed from scaffolding poles and thick planks. The procedure was a complete success and the bear's life, as well as his tooth, were saved.

Please note that we are happy to provide root canal treatments at The Dental Centre, but only on human patients!



## Mouth Cancer

Just a reminder that it is Mouth Cancer Action Month from 1st to 30th November 2012.

Anyone can be affected by mouth cancer, whether they have their own teeth or not. Mouth cancers are more common in people over 40, particularly men. However, research has shown that mouth cancer is becoming more common in younger patients and in women. There are, on average, almost 6,000 new cases of mouth cancer diagnosed in the UK each year. The number of new cases of mouth cancer is on the increase. The five year survival rate of mouth cancer patients is just 50%, BUT early diagnosis gives patients a 90% chance of survival.

Regular visits to the dentist will ensure you are professionally screened for signs of mouth cancer.

Look out for:

- Ulcers which do not heal within three weeks
  - Red and white patches in the mouth
  - Unusual lumps or swellings in the mouth
- If your mouth is a concern make an appointment with us as soon as possible.

**KNOW THE RISKS – PREVENTION IS KEY.** Lifestyle choices can prevent this significant threat. Most cases of mouth cancer are linked to tobacco and alcohol. The human papilloma virus (HPV) and poor diet have been linked to mouth cancer. A growing number are developing the disease without displaying any traditional risk factors – underlining the need for check-ups and self-examination.

Men were once five times more likely to develop mouth cancer – now they are just twice as likely. The age group affected is falling as younger people than ever are diagnosed.

**Remember: If in doubt, get checked out!** More information is available online at [www.mouthcancer.org](http://www.mouthcancer.org)

Early detection transforms survival chances to 90%

 **Mouth Cancer Action Month**  
1 -30 November 2012  
British Dental Health Foundation

## Dental Hygienists

Kate is here at the practice, all day Wednesday and Thursday, helping patients keep their teeth and gums healthy. Our second hygienist, Julita, 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.



## Focus on Dental Emergencies



Any dental emergency like an injury to the teeth or gums can be potentially serious and should not be ignored. Ignoring a dental problem can increase the risk of permanent damage as well as the need for more extensive and expensive treatment in the future. Certain emergencies require immediate hospital attention. These include any incident where consciousness is lost, where there is the possibility that bones are broken eg. a fractured jaw, where there is uncontrolled bleeding or large facial swelling. With less serious problems the dentist should be contacted as soon as possible to arrange an appointment. Here's a quick summary of some temporary remedies for some common dental problems:

**Chipped or Broken Teeth.** If possible, save any pieces. Rinse the mouth using warm water; rinse any broken pieces. If there's bleeding, apply pressure with a clean cloth or cotton handkerchief to the area for about 10 minutes or until the bleeding stops. Apply a cold compress to the outside of the mouth, cheek, or lip near the broken/chipped tooth to keep any swelling down and relieve pain. If there is a hole in the tooth this can be temporarily filled with temporary dental cement available in kits from some pharmacies and supermarkets. See the dentist as soon as possible.

**Knocked-out Tooth.** Retrieve the tooth, hold it by the crown (the part that is usually exposed in the mouth), and rinse off the tooth root with water if it's dirty. Do not scrub it or remove any attached tissue fragments. If possible, try to put the tooth back in place. Make sure it's facing the right way. Never force it into the socket. If it's not possible to reinsert the tooth in the socket, put the tooth in a small container of milk or saliva, or hold inside the mouth in the cheek. In all cases, see the dentist as quickly as possible. Knocked out teeth with the highest chances of being saved are those seen by the dentist and returned to their socket within 1 hour of being knocked out.

**Extruded (partially dislodged) Tooth.** See the dentist right away. Until you reach the dental practice, to relieve pain, apply a cold compress to the outside of the mouth or cheek in the affected area. Take your normal pain reliever if needed. Avoid anything with Aspirin in it as this may cause problems with bleeding.

**Objects Caught Between Teeth.** First, try using dental floss to very gently and

carefully remove the object. If you can't get the object out, see your dentist. Never use a pin or other sharp object to poke at the stuck object. These instruments can cut your gums or scratch your tooth surface.

**Lost Filling.** As a temporary measure, stick a piece of sugarless gum into the cavity (sugar-filled gum will cause pain) or use a temporary dental cement available in kits from some pharmacies and supermarkets.

**Lost Crown.** If the crown falls off, make an appointment to see the dentist as soon as possible and bring the crown with you. If possible, slip the crown back over the tooth. Before doing so gently try to remove any debris from within the crown and around the tooth. Coat the inner surface with a temporary dental cement, toothpaste, denture adhesive or softened chewing gum to help hold the crown in place. Do not use super glue! Use only a very small amount of these things and make sure the crown is the right way around.

**Broken Brace Wires.** If a wire breaks or sticks out of a bracket or band and is poking your cheek, tongue, or gum, try using the eraser end of a pencil to push the wire into a more comfortable position. If you can't reposition the wire, cover the end with orthodontic wax, a small cotton ball, or piece of gauze until you can get to your orthodontist. Never try cutting the wire.

**Abscess.** Abscesses are infections that occur around the root of a tooth or in the space between the teeth and gums. Abscesses are a serious condition that can damage tissue and surrounding teeth, with the infection possibly spreading to other parts of the body if left untreated. Because of the serious oral health and general health problems that can result from an abscess, if you have a swelling or discharge in or around the mouth, it is important to see the dentist as soon as possible.

**Soft Tissue Injuries (lips, tongue, etc).** You can clean injured skin surfaces with mild soapy water and a soft clean cloth. To clean cuts inside the mouth, rinse with a salt water solution. If your lip is swollen or bruised, apply a cold compress. If there is bleeding, apply pressure with a clean cloth.

**Toothache.** Most of the above remedies should prevent toothache, but tooth pain may be controlled by your normal painkiller. If you have no medical contraindications to it, Ibuprofen (Nurofen) is one of the best painkillers for toothache. Applying oil of cloves on some cotton wool onto the tooth can temporarily numb the tooth. Antiseptic gels and mouthwashes can also make the mouth more comfortable in some circumstances. Use of sensitive toothpastes works in reducing the pain of sensitive teeth.

Of course the best way of avoiding problems is prevention. Attending the dentist for regular check-ups allows most problems to be caught early before they give pain.

Always use a custom made mouthguard if playing contact sports or sports using a hard ball or stick.

**In an emergency please contact the practice. Details of the out of hours service is available on the practice answerphone or online at [www.thedentalcentre.org](http://www.thedentalcentre.org).**

### Visiting the Dental Hygienist

At The Dental Centre we have two dental hygienists. Kate is here on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Julita, 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 an enjoyable Autumn.  
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](http://www.thedentalcentre.org)*

