



"Visiting the dentist annually reduces the risk of tooth decay by 60%"

The Rickmansworth Dental Centre Newsletter

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Welcome to the 48th 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 2013 Newsletter. We hope you are thawing out after what seems to have been a very long Winter. Not too many signs of Spring at the moment, but there have been rumours of a bright, glowing orb seen in the sky!

An uneventful, but busy few weeks at The Dental Centre. The practice management software has just been upgraded with some new features. We are currently investigating how these can be used to improve your visits with us. 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.



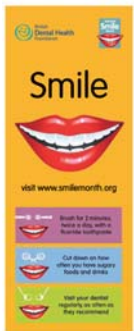
National Smile Month

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.

Sounds simple? You'd think so, but there's evidence to suggest not everyone keeps to these three most basic of messages. National Smile Month is a great opportunity for those who don't to take stock of their oral health habits, and a great opportunity for those who do to pass the message on to others.

Organised by the UK's leading oral health charity, the British Dental Health Foundation, now in its 37th year, National Smile Month will take place between May 20 and June 20 2013. More information can be found online at www.smilemonth.org.



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.



Flossed in Space

A toothbrush of Buzz Aldrin, a crew member of Apollo 11, was recently auctioned for \$22,705.



The toothbrush and its plastic holder were aboard the Apollo 11 mission to the moon between July 16 and July 24, 1969. The S-19 model manufactured by Lactona, a Dutch manufacturer of oral hygiene products, was part of the astronauts' dental care set. Aldrin used the toothbrush while in the Columbia command module and the Eagle lunar module prior to the lunar landing. It is one of only two toothbrushes taken to the lunar surface during the first moon landing. Other than the broken rubber tip, the toothbrush shows only the usual signs of use and is otherwise in fine condition.

During the U.S. Mercury program, the space flights were so short that there was no need for an in-flight dental emergency protocol, and prevention was the primary focus. Owing to the extended time spent in space during the Gemini program, a toothbrush was added to flight kits as a preventative measure. Apollo missions then incorporated a digestible dentifrice and floss, as well as antibiotics. Instrumentation like forceps and temporary filling materials was first introduced when the Skylab space station was launched into orbit in the early 1970s and has been part of the emergency kits ever since. The Soviets did not have a dental contingency protocol and Russian cosmonaut, Yuri Romanenko, had to go through two weeks of incapacitating tooth pain during the Salyut 6 mission in 1978.

Focus On Jaw Problems



What is dental occlusion?

Dental occlusion is another name for the way your teeth meet when your jaws bite together.

What is TMJ?

The letters TMJ are short for 'temporo-mandibular joint', which is the joint connecting your lower jaw and your skull. The movement in this joint lets you open and close your mouth and chew from side to side.

What kind of problems might I have?

If your teeth don't fit together properly, you can have problems not only in your teeth themselves, but also the gums, the temporo-mandibular joint or the muscles that move your jaw. These problems are called 'occlusal' problems.

•Teeth. Teeth that are out of line, heavily worn or constantly breaking, fillings that fracture or crowns that work loose may all

be signs of occlusal problems. Your teeth may also be tender to bite on or may ache constantly.

•Gums. Loose teeth or receding gums can be made worse by a faulty bite.

•TMJ. Clicking, grinding or pain in your jaw joints, ringing or buzzing in your ears and difficulty in opening or closing your mouth could all be due to your teeth not meeting each other properly.

•Muscles. If your jaw is in the wrong position, the muscles that move the jaw have to work a lot harder and can get tired. This leads to muscle spasm. The main symptoms are continual headaches or migraine, especially first thing in the morning; pain behind your eyes; sinus pain and pains in your neck and shoulders. Sometimes even back muscles are involved.

How can I tell if I have a problem?

You may find that you clench or grind your teeth, although most people who do aren't aware of it. Sometimes this can be caused by anxiety, but generally most people clench their teeth when they are concentrating on a task - housework, gardening, car mechanics, typing and so on.

You may wake up in the morning with a stiff jaw or tenderness when you bite together. This could be due to clenching or grinding your teeth in your sleep. Most people who grind their teeth do it while they are asleep and may not know they are doing it.

If you suffer from severe headaches, or neck and shoulder pain, you may not have linked this with possible jaw problems. Or you may keep having pain or discomfort on the side of your face around your ears or jaw joints or difficulty in moving your jaw. These are all symptoms of TMJ problems.

If you are missing some teeth at the back of your mouth, this may lead to an unbalanced bite, which can cause uneven pressure on your teeth.

Together, all these symptoms are called 'TMJ Pain Dysfunction Syndrome'.

How many people suffer from these problems?

Up to 1 in 4 people may have some symptoms. Both men and women are affected equally, although women tend to seek treatment more often than men do. The symptoms can often start with the menopause or other hormonal changes.

Many people have imperfect occlusion and missing teeth, yet never have symptoms because they adjust to their problems. Occasionally, in times of increased stress and tension, the symptoms may appear and then go away immediately. Sometimes teeth and gums may be affected over longer periods of time

How are occlusal problems treated?

See Dr. Deitsch. He may be able to help you or may refer you to a specialist who deals with occlusal problems.

Often it is possible to spot the signs of an occlusal problem. Various muscles may be sore when tested, or the broken and worn areas of your teeth will show you are grinding your teeth or have an incorrect bite.

If Adam suspects that your problems are due to grinding the teeth at night, he may recommend a small plastic appliance that fits over your upper or lower teeth. This appliance needs to be measured and fitted very accurately so that when you bite on it, all your teeth meet at exactly the same time in a position where your muscles are relaxed. You just have to wear this at night. Sometimes these appliances can be used to diagnose other problems with the bite of the teeth.

Tooth Adjustment (equilibration)

Your teeth may need to be carefully adjusted to meet evenly. Changing the direction and position of the slopes that guide your teeth together can often help to reposition the jaw.

Replacement of teeth

The temporo-mandibular joint needs equal support from both sides of both jaws. The chewing action is designed to work properly only when all your teeth are present and in the correct position. Missing teeth may need to be replaced with implants, a partial denture or bridgework.

Medication

Some drugs can help in certain cases, but this is usually only temporary. Hormone replacement therapy may also help some women.

Diet and Exercise

As with any joint pain, it can help to put less stress on the joint. So a soft diet can be helpful, as can corrective exercises and external heat. Physiotherapy exercises can often help.

Relaxation

Counselling and relaxation therapy may help in some cases. These techniques help the patient to become more aware of stressful situations and to control tension.

Will straightening my teeth help?

If your teeth are too far out of line or in a totally incorrect bite position, it may be necessary to fit an orthodontic appliance to move them into a better position.

With all treatments, relief in some patients is instant. In others it can take a long time.

If you think you have any of these problems or other dental queries, please ask Dr. Deitsch.

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 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*

