



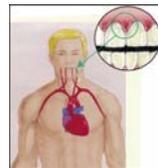
# The Rickmansworth Dental Centre Newsletter

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Welcome to the 49<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 Summer 2013 Newsletter. We hope you are having a fantastic summer and enjoying the rare occurrence of weeks of sunshine. In this issue of our newsletter, we have an article focussing on the now proven and worrying link between gum disease and heart disease.



Oral Health Month is nearly here and the British Dental Association has launched their 'Make A Meal Of It' campaign. 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



## Happy Birthday To Us

The Rickmansworth Dental Centre has become a teenager, as we celebrate our 13<sup>th</sup> birthday this Summer. However, we are not going to sulk in our bedroom and give monosyllabic answers, but will still continue to update and improve all areas of the practice to provide you with the best treatment possible. Hopefully we can continue to do this for many more years to come.

## It's A Hard Day's Bite! (Update)

In our Autumn 2011 Newsletter (Issue 42), we reported how a Canadian dentist had bought John Lennon's rotten molar tooth in an auction for £19,500. He has just revealed that he has sent the tooth to a laboratory where they will attempt to extract Lennon's DNA from the tooth. He believes that Lennon's DNA can be harvested and, in time, converted from tissue cells into stem cells, and eventually into a reborn Beatle! Watch this space for further updates



## Dental Hygienists

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

## Oral Health Month

This September, the British Dental Association and Colgate are partnering to raise awareness of the importance of family oral health as part of overall health. Colgate Oral Health Month, now in its 11th year, aims to inform and educate the general public on the importance of healthy mouths in families, and to encourage communication between dental professionals and their patients. The theme for the 2013 campaign is 'Your smiles, your family, your health' with the following messages:



- Brush your teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste
- Avoid sugary snacks and drinks between meals
- Visit the dentist regularly

In addition to raising awareness of the importance of oral health to the entire population, Colgate is hosting a Q&A event on their website ([www.colgate.co.uk/oralhealthmonth](http://www.colgate.co.uk/oralhealthmonth)) during the month of September. On the website members of the public can have their oral care questions answered by one of their dental team. Of course if you have any queries we will happily try to answer them at The Dental Centre.



## Make A Meal Of It

The British Dental Association (BDA) has started a campaign to reduce the harm done to children's oral health by taking sugary and acidic food and drink outside regular mealtimes.



The 'Make a meal of it' campaign, launched on 18 June 2013, proposes restrictions on the availability and advertising of such products. The BDA is also supporting a specific tax on sugary, carbonated drinks. The campaign seeks to encourage:

- supermarkets to restrict the availability of unhealthy foods at checkouts,
- cinemas to downsize their unhealthy food and drink offerings,
- schools and hospitals to withdraw unhealthy food and drink from vending machines.

Further information can be found by downloading the campaign leaflet from [http://www.bda.org/Images/make\\_a\\_meal\\_of\\_it\\_leaflet.pdf](http://www.bda.org/Images/make_a_meal_of_it_leaflet.pdf).

## Focus On Gum and Heart Disease

### What is gum disease?

Gum disease describes swelling, soreness or infection of the tissues supporting the teeth. There are two main forms of gum disease: gingivitis and periodontal disease.

Gingivitis means inflammation of the gums. This is when the gums around the teeth become very red and swollen. Often the swollen gums bleed when they are brushed during cleaning.

Long-standing gingivitis can turn into periodontal disease. There are a number of types of periodontal disease and they all affect the tissues supporting the teeth. As the disease gets worse the bone anchoring the teeth in the jaw is lost, making the teeth loose. If this is not treated, the teeth may eventually fall out.

All gum disease is caused by plaque. Plaque is a film of bacteria, which forms on the surface of the teeth and gums every day. Many of the bacteria in plaque are completely harmless, but there are some that have been shown to be the main cause of gum disease.

### What is heart disease?

One of the main causes of heart disease is atherosclerosis. Atherosclerosis is when the arteries become narrow and damaged. It happens when the arteries are clogged up with fatty deposits or the walls of the arteries become inflamed. This narrowing can happen in the arteries that supply blood to the heart, depriving it of the oxygen and nutrients it needs to work normally. When the blood flow through an artery is stopped, a heart attack can occur. Arteries supplying blood to the brain can also be affected by atherosclerosis. If a blood clot becomes lodged in a narrowed artery, blood flow to part of the brain may be stopped. This is called a stroke.

### What is the connection between gum and heart disease?

Over the past few years, there have been many studies linking gum disease and heart disease. At first, there were observations that people with poor oral health were more prone to heart disease. More recently, scientists have found clear links between the total amount of periodontal (gum) bacteria in the mouth and blockages in the arteries of the heart. Researchers have found that people with periodontal disease are almost twice as likely to suffer from coronary artery disease as those without periodontal

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disease.

Several theories exist to explain the link between periodontal disease and heart disease. One theory is that oral bacteria can affect the heart when they enter the blood stream, attaching to fatty plaques in the coronary arteries (heart blood vessels) and contributing to clot formation. Coronary artery disease is characterized by a thickening of the walls of the coronary arteries due to the build up of fatty proteins. Blood clots can obstruct normal blood flow, restricting the amount of nutrients and oxygen required for the heart to function properly. This may lead to heart attacks.

Other possibilities lie in the body's own defence mechanisms against bacteria. One of the body's natural responses to infection is inflammation (swelling). It's possible that as these oral bacteria travel through the body, they trigger a similar response, causing the cells to swell. This swelling could then narrow an artery and increase the risk of clots.

**What are the signs of gum disease?**

The first sign is blood on the toothbrush or in the rinsing water on cleaning the teeth. Diseased gums may also bleed when eating, leaving a bad taste in the mouth. The breath may also become unpleasant.

**What do I do if I think I have gum disease?**

The first thing to do is visit the dentist for a thorough check-up of your teeth and gums. The dentist can measure the 'cuff' of gum around each tooth to see if there is any sign that periodontal disease has started. X-rays may also be needed to see the amount of bone that has been lost. This assessment is very important, so the correct treatment can be prescribed for you.

**What treatments are needed?**

The dentist or hygienist will usually give your teeth a thorough clean. You'll also be shown how to remove plaque successfully yourself, cleaning all the surfaces of your teeth thoroughly and effectively. This may take a number of sessions with the dentist or hygienist. Once your teeth are clean, further cleaning of the roots of the teeth, may be required to make sure the last pockets of bacteria are removed. Application of antibiotics or other medicaments may help restore the gums to full health.

In very severe cases, referral to a gum specialist may be considered. See below for more information on dental hygienists.

**Once I have had periodontal disease, can I get it again?**

The periodontal diseases are never cured. But as long as you keep up the home care you have been taught, any further loss of bone will be very slow and it may stop altogether. However, you must make sure you remove plaque every day, and go for regular check-ups by the dentist and hygienist.

### Visiting the Dental Hygienist

At The Dental Centre we have two dental hygienists. Kate is here on Wednesdays and Thursdays. 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 great Summer.  
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)*

