

The Rickmansworth Dental Centre Newsletter

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Issue 53, Summer 2014

Welcome to the 53rd 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 2014 Newsletter. We hope you are having a great summer. It's been excellent to see the sun shining; it's just a shame British sporting achievements haven't matched the good weather!

Oral Health Month is approaching. More of that below. We are also focusing on Fluoride and its' dental benefits.

Adam would like to thank everyone for their good wishes, following the passing of his mother a few weeks ago. He apologises for any inconvenience to his patients during this time.

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

We are celebrating our 14th birthday this Summer at The Dental Centre. We are still continually updating and improving 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.

Oral Health Month

This September, Colgate and the British Dental Association are partnering during Oral Health Month 2014 to raise awareness of the importance of oral health in children. During Oral Health Month Colgate is re-launching its Bright Smiles, Bright Futures™ campaign in the UK. This campaign is already running in other countries around the world.

Colgate Bright Smiles, Bright Futures™ programme targets improving the oral health of children globally through education and prevention and, since 1991, has helped educate 700 million children across 80 countries worldwide.

The main messages of the campaign are:

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

For the campaign Colgate have produced a leaflet on children's oral health. A copy of this can be downloaded from the practice website at:

<http://www.thedentalcentre.org/bsbf.pdf>



Ancient Implants

If you thought dental implants, used to replace missing teeth, were a new development, archaeologists have discovered a 2,300 year-old iron pin in place of an upper incisor at the La Tène burial site in Le Chêne in northern France. The recipient was a young woman who had been buried in a richly furnished timber chamber. The pin could be one of the earliest examples of a dental implant.

The iron pin may have been inserted during life to replace a lost tooth; however, the archaeologists have suggested that the woman may already have been dead when the pin was placed, to improve the appearance of the corpse for the funeral service.



Dental Hygienists

Our two hygienists, Julita and Alicia are working at The Dental Centre helping patients keep their teeth and gums healthy. They are here on various sessions during the week, including one Saturday morning a month. If you contact Pam on reception, she will be able to give you further information.

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 Fluoride

What is fluoride?

Fluoride is a natural mineral that is found in many foods and in all drinking water. The amount of fluoride in water varies from area to area.

What are the benefits of fluoride?

Fluoride can greatly help dental health by strengthening the tooth enamel, making it more resistant to tooth decay. It also reduces the amount of acid that the bacteria on your teeth produce.

Children who have fluoride when their teeth are developing tend to have shallower grooves in their teeth, so plaque can be more easily removed. Plaque is a thin, sticky film of bacteria that constantly forms on your teeth.

The addition of fluoride to water has been researched for over 50 years, and water fluoridation has been proven to reduce decay by 40-60%.



Where can I find fluoride?

Fluoride is found naturally in many foods and water supplies, and is also added to some drinking water. Having 0.7 to 1.2 parts of fluoride for every million parts of water (0.7ppm to 1.2ppm) has been shown to have the best effect.

Is there enough fluoride in my water supply?

Possibly. However, only a few places (Hartlepool in the North East of England, and parts of Essex) have enough natural fluoride to benefit dental health. In other places it is added to only around 10% of the UK population's water supply - mainly in the West Midlands and the North East. Your water supplier will be able to tell you whether your water supply has fluoride added. The amount of fluoride added to the water will vary depending on which area you live in. Your local water supplier or health authority should be able to tell you how much fluoride is in the water in your area. The main supplier of water in the Rickmansworth area is Affinity Water.

Their website (<https://www.affinitywater.co.uk/water-quality-fluoride.aspx>) has the facility to check fluoride content in the water according to your postcode.

Fluoride is also naturally present in some foods and drinks, for example fish and tea. Some countries add fluoride to their table salt and milk instead of to the water supplies. One cup of tea can contain between 0.3 milligrams and 0.5 milligrams of fluoride, and if you drink it with milk your teeth will also benefit from the calcium. It is best to drink tea without sugar to reduce the risk of tooth decay even more.

What about fluoride toothpaste?

Most toothpastes now contain fluoride, and most people get their fluoride this way. Fluoride toothpaste is very effective in preventing tooth decay. The amount of fluoride in toothpaste is usually enough to lower the level of decay. In areas where the water supply is fluoridated, fluoride toothpaste gives extra protection.

All children up to three years old should use a toothpaste with a fluoride level of at least 1000ppm (parts per million). After three years old they should use a toothpaste that contains 1350ppm to 1500ppm.

Parents should supervise their children's tooth brushing, and use only a pea-sized smear of fluoride toothpaste until they are about 7 years old.

Should people have extra fluoride?

Children living in poorer areas where the

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water supplies are not fluoridated can have 5 times more decay than children living in better-off or fluoridated areas. Research suggests that adding fluoride to the water is the best way of reducing these 'dental inequalities'.

Your dentist or dental hygienist can apply fluorides to your teeth. These come as gels and are more concentrated than ones you can apply yourself, so you do not need them as often. Some adults can benefit from these applications. Fluoride gels can help to reduce root decay - especially for people with 'dry mouth'.

Some people are more likely to have tooth decay, and the dentist may also advise using fluoride supplements as well as fluoride toothpaste for extra protection. It is very important that you only take fluoride supplements on the advice of a dentist, and that you use them in the way they say. Supplements are suitable for children from about 3 onwards and can help reduce decay.

What are the side effects?

'Dental fluorosis' is caused by having too much fluoride when the teeth are developing. This can happen when fluoride supplements are taken by children under 7 who live in areas where the water supply is fluoridated. It can also happen when children swallow toothpaste.

What is fluorosis?

In its mildest form, dental fluorosis appears as very fine pearly white lines or flecking on the surface of the teeth. This mild fluorosis can often only be spotted by a dental expert. Severe fluorosis may lead to the enamel being pitted and discoloured. Fortunately, severe fluorosis is rare in the UK.

Is fluoride safe?

Many reports have been published throughout the world about the pros and cons of fluoride. After many years the scientific conclusion is that fluoride toothpaste and correctly fluoridated water, salt and milk are of great benefit to dental health, help to reduce decay, and cause no harmful side effects to general health. Studies carried out for the government by York University and the Medical Research Council have failed to find any evidence that fluoride added to water causes harmful side effects.

Opponents of fluoridation claim they have firm evidence that fluoride added to water is harmful. However, scientific analysis has not supported their claims.

Worldwide, over 300 million people drink fluoridated water supplies. Many millions more regularly use fluoridated toothpaste. This has led to improved levels of dental health which in turn benefits general health.

If you have any questions or concerns about any of the issues discussed, please do not hesitate to ask Adam or any of the staff at The Dental Centre.

Visiting the Dental Hygienist

At The Dental Centre we have two dental hygienists. Alicia is here on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Julita, our other hygienist works here Mondays and one Saturday morning a month (please contact the surgery for further details).

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*

