

# The Rickmansworth Dental Centre

## Newsletter

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Welcome to the eighth 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



The sun has made an appearance, flowers are starting to bloom and it looks as if winter has given way to spring (for the time being anyway!). With our third anniversary rapidly approaching, it has been another hectic few months at The Dental Centre. As we announced in our last newsletter, our aim for 2003 is to become a member of the British Dental Association's Good Practice scheme. We have already started working towards acceptance into the scheme, the basis of which is the following ten commitments:

1. We aim to provide dental care of consistently good quality, for all patients.
2. We only provide care that meets your needs and wishes.
3. We aim to make your treatment as comfortable and convenient as possible.
4. We look after your general health and safety while receiving dental care.
5. We follow the British Dental Association's guidelines on infection control.
6. We check for mouth cancer and tell you what we find.
7. We take part in continuing professional development to keep our skills and knowledge up to date.
8. We train all staff in practice-wide work systems and review training plans once a year.
9. We welcome feedback and deal promptly with any complaints.
10. Every member of the practice is aware of the need to work safely under General Dental Council guidelines. To comply with each commitment, the practice must satisfy a number of relevant standards, all of which are based upon a consensus of what is regarded as good practice by the profession. It may take several months to complete all the necessary work to be accepted onto the scheme, but it is our way of showing that you are getting the best care and attention possible.

On the theme of providing the best treatment possible, we are planning a major refurbishment of the surgery in

the near future. Plans are in the very early stages at the moment, but watch this space for further details.

### Emergencies

With various Bank Holidays, etc. coming up, please remember that even if we are closed, cover has been arranged. In a severe emergency please phone the practice for emergency information.



### Goodbye & Hello

Goodbye and good luck to our nurse, Sarah, who after six months with us, is going back home to New Zealand. A big welcome to our new nurse, Ayshea.



### Dental Hygienist

In May, Donna, our dental hygienist, is celebrating her first anniversary of joining the practice. She has proved very popular and many patients are now showing the benefits of her treatment. There is information about the hygienist and what she does on the back of this newsletter.



### Focus On Wisdom Teeth



#### What are wisdom teeth?

Wisdom teeth are so named because they tend to come through at a later stage than the other teeth - when you have supposedly acquired wisdom — around 18-25 years old. They can, however, erupt at any age from 16. They are also called third molars. Wisdom teeth are located at the very back of the mouth, top and bottom on each side.

#### Does everyone have wisdom teeth?

Some people may not have wisdom teeth at all but for those that do, getting wisdom teeth is like 'teething' as an adult —uncomfortable while the tooth comes through the gum, but once it has erupted it should behave just like any other tooth. In some cases, more

complex problems can arise, usually in the lower wisdom teeth.

#### What kinds of problems do they cause?

Problems arise when there is insufficient room for the tooth to come through; or if there is loss of 'eruption potential' — when the tooth remains buried in the bone. Wisdom teeth become impacted when they grow at the wrong angle, and get stuck behind the molar tooth in front. However, infection can occur when just part of the tooth erupts, because this opens a passage for bacteria to reach the tooth under the surface, causing gum soreness and gum inflammation around the tooth. This can be painful and unpleasant and, in very rare cases the infection can spread into other parts of the mouth, head and neck, causing serious illness.

#### What can you do to alleviate problems?

Orthodontics at an earlier stage may prevent or at least identify potential wisdom tooth problems. Good oral hygiene can prevent discomfort becoming infection in normally erupting wisdom teeth. If your wisdom teeth are causing you pain, keep the area clean, and rinse with warm salt-water mouthwashes (1 teaspoon of salt to one glass of water) as the tooth is coming through.

If after 2-3 days the pain is still severe, if your temperature is still raised or the glands in your neck are still swollen, seek dental advice. It may be necessary to have treatment, including antibiotics as an emergency measure and to consider the removal of the tooth or teeth.

#### What can the dentist do?

If the wisdom tooth is in a normal position but infection has set in, getting the area clean and using antimicrobial mouthwashes or possibly antibiotics, should mean it comes through normally. If the tooth is not going to come through normally, extraction of one or more wisdom teeth may be necessary to

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prevent further pain and repeat infections.

#### **What does extraction involve?**

Dr. Deitsch may perform extractions under local anaesthetic of wisdom teeth that are within his range of skill and experience. However, if all four wisdom teeth are impacted and need to be extracted, this might involve considerable surgery, possibly carried out at one session in hospital under general anaesthetic by a specialist oral surgeon. Sedation can be of help if the extraction is difficult and to be performed under local anaesthetic as the noise and sensation can be unpleasant.

#### **What can go wrong?**

The nerve inside the lower jaw is close to the root of wisdom teeth, and rarely the procedure may damage this nerve, leading to a numb lip or tongue. This complication is quite rare and often the damaged nerve returns to normal.

#### **What about aftercare?**

Depending on the complexity of the problem, one can expect swelling for 48-72 hours. After 3-5 days any soreness should have dissipated. There will normally be stitches. These may need to be removed after about a week or may dissolve away by themselves. The area needs to be kept very clean and rinsed with warm salt-water mouthwashes for a few days. Aftercare instructions will be given from Adam or the oral surgeon.

## **Visiting the Dental Hygienist**

At The Dental Centre we now have a dental hygienist. Donna, our new hygienist, is here on Mondays and Thursdays. 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's 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 will carry out this type of work. However, the hygienist has 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. Your 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 your 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.



*Have a good 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](http://www.thedentalcentre.org)*

