



Smiles for life

**ELSABET TEKLE, D.D.S., AND
STEVEN PARKER, D.D.S.,
HAVE JOINED PRACTICES**

OUR NEW OFFICE LOCATION

*We are pleased to announce that
we have a new office located at:*
**2415 Musgrove Road, Suite 309
Silver Spring, MD 20904**

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Do adults need fluoride?

Fall 2009

**Produced for
the patients of
Elsabet Tekle, D.D.S.,
and
Steven Parker, D.D.S.**

DENTAL TEAM

Receptionist:

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Margarita Rois-Torres
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Many adults believe their need for fluoride ended when all their permanent teeth erupted, but that's not the case. Adults, especially those who didn't receive adequate fluoride as children, are still in need of fluoride to help prevent decay as adults. As a society that is becoming consumers of bottled and filtered water, we all are missing the exposure to fluoride from fluoridated tap water, and thus it becomes even more important for adults to receive fluoride treatments after the routine dental exam and cleaning. There is a much more improved uptake of fluoride by the teeth right after the preventive, routine dental cleaning.

Fluoride helps prevent cavities in two ways. First, it affects the enamel of the teeth, helping to interfere with the decay process. Using fluoride on the teeth daily in a toothpaste or rinse, coupled with fluoride treatments as recommended by a dentist, can aid in stopping decay and help the enamel of the teeth better resist future cavities.

In addition, there are positive systemic responses to fluoride. When fluoride enters the body, it becomes part of bodily fluids, such as saliva, and builds up to continually bathe the

surface of the teeth and provide further resistance to acid attacks that cause decay.

Aside from fighting decay on the biting surfaces of teeth, where it often starts, fluoride can also help prevent problems near the gum line. Adults who often experience gum recession that exposes the roots of the teeth may be subject to root decay. The chances of suffering from root decay increase with age. However, once fluoride has become part of the tooth, it can diminish the chances of root decay.

Another dental problem connected to aging is dry mouth, which can result from the use of certain medications and has been linked to systemic conditions such as diabetes. Decreased saliva can mean increased chances of decay because there isn't enough saliva to help wash away debris and cavity-causing bacteria. Adequate fluoride throughout life can help to counteract problems such as these and reduce chances of decay.

More and more Americans are smiling well into their golden years because they are able to keep their own teeth. Fluoride—for both children and adults—has been a big reason why.



THE CANDY TRAP

That time of year is coming. You try not to think about it, but inside, you know that the arrival of cooler weather will bring with it one holiday after another loaded with goodies that are bad for your waistline and probably worse for your teeth.

To get through the season without destroying your dental health or the dental health of your child, you need a game plan. Eating all those sweets as quickly as possible may lessen the effects on teeth, but that strategy can leave you with a queasy stomach and extra pounds as well.

Instead of gorging, consider changing your attitude toward treats. Going out for ice cream isn't nearly as much fun when you do it every day. The same is true for candy and other sugary desserts. Doling out the sweets on a once-a-week basis will return candy to "special occasion" status.

Freezing candy and other confectioneries, such as cupcakes and cookies, should allow you to implement this strategy without concern for freshness.

With a little planning, you can survive the sweet-laden holidays ahead with your dental health and your waistline intact.

Thank you for all your referrals. We appreciate them!

Blood and gums

You're happily brushing away. You're about to rinse your brush when you notice the reddish hue in the bristles. You look down and see blood in the sink as well. What's going on?

While bleeding gums can be a little frightening, the cause of the problem can usually be reversed if treated quickly.

Gingivitis, which causes gums to become puffy, tender, and to bleed, can be a symptom of periodontal disease or vitamin C deficiency.

Although vitamin C deficiency is an unlikely cause, about 15 percent of Americans do suffer from low vitamin C. In addition to gingivitis, symptoms of low C include dry, scaly skin, hair that is dry and splits, nosebleeds, swollen joints, anemia, and lowered resistance to infection. Those suffering from vitamin C deficiency may be prescribed vitamins and encouraged to eat a diet high in fruits and vegetables containing this essential vitamin. Good sources include citrus fruits, broccoli, cauliflower, blueberries, cranberries, and juices.

Periodontal disease is far more common than vitamin C deficiency, affecting 75 percent or more of the population. In the early stages, periodontal disease can often be cured. Gingivitis is one of the first signs of periodontal disease, and it is a warning that the gums need more attention. A first step to take is to put more effort into oral hygiene. This means brushing after each meal and flossing daily. Professional dental care is also a must. Untreated, gingivitis can lead to periodontitis, which causes the pockets between the gums and teeth to deepen and teeth to loosen. Periodontal disease is the number-one cause of tooth loss.

Other causes of gingivitis include certain medications, pregnancy, and some systemic diseases, such as diabetes. Brushing too hard and eating certain foods that are hard on gums can also lead to bleeding.

Your dentist is the gatekeeper for health problems that begin in the mouth. Bleeding gums should not be ignored. If you notice pinkish-red on your toothbrush, step up your home-care routine, but also seek professional help to find the root cause of the problem.

FOODS THAT FIGHT DECAY

Most people know that certain foods are less damaging to your teeth than others, but there are also foods that can be beneficial. Certain fruits and vegetables and dairy foods can have beneficial effects.

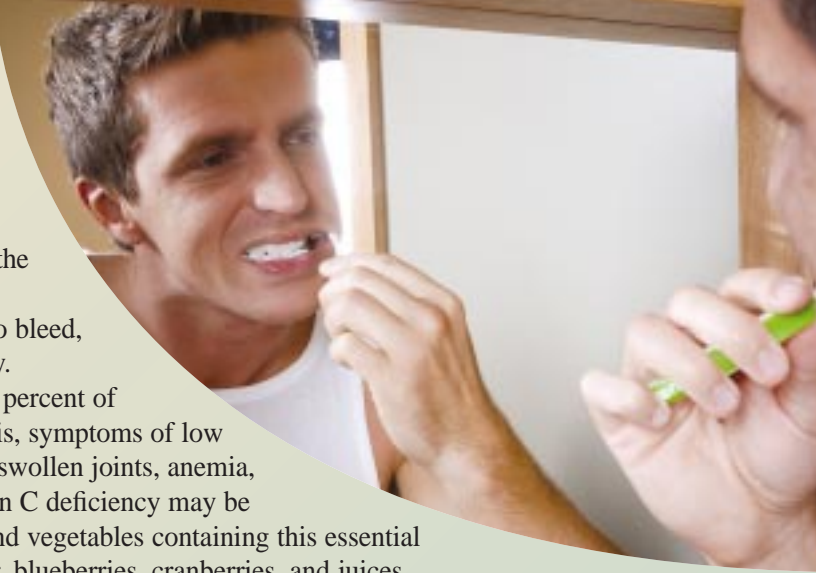
Some of the best foods for teeth are also the noisiest to eat. These include raw foods that are known for going "crunch." Perhaps the most famous of these are apples, which are well-known for their ability to help cleanse the mouth. Carrots and celery work in a similar fashion, and when eaten regularly, they may even help to lighten stains and brighten your smile. Raw foods also stimulate the salivary glands to help wash away food debris found on teeth.

Foods that contain calcium—such as yogurt and cheeses—

are known for helping children to grow strong teeth, but dairy foods are good for your teeth your whole life through. Cheese, in particular, contains nutrients that can interfere with plaque formation. In addition, the texture of some cheeses can help increase saliva production.

When choosing the occasional sweet, chocolate, although it contains sugar, can be less detrimental than other treats because it melts away rather than sticking to teeth.

Improving your dental health isn't simply a matter of avoiding foods that are sugar-laden and sticky. Rather, choosing foods that are good for your teeth can mean enjoying better dental health and a healthier diet.



Digital dental DIAGNOSTICS

Dental x-rays are essential to early diagnosis of decay, abscesses, and other oral-health problems—before the patient feels any pain and when it can be treated most conservatively to save teeth. X-rays have been used for decades to examine bone anatomy, malocclusions, and impacted teeth.

Digital x-rays represent a remarkable advancement in x-ray technology. Digital x-rays use sensors to create a computer image in just seconds. This means a large reduction in radiation coupled with the opportunity to focus in tightly on a specific part of the image. Digital x-rays are more environmentally friendly as well, since the images are developed electronically without chemicals.

Diagnosing dental problems quickly and effectively is important to determining the best possible treatment. Digital x-rays make diagnostics easier because they allow our patients to see the pictures as we explain the situation. That way, we can determine a treatment course that will help us to remedy the problem quickly and effectively.



THE MEANING BEHIND THE SEAL

The symbol of the American Dental Association was chosen in 1965, but parts of the insignia date back to the earliest dental association in the United States, and even to the ancient Greeks.

Each piece of the symbol has meaning that directly links it to the dental profession. The outer part of the design uses a triangle entwined with a circle. The triangle is the Greek letter delta, which stands for dentistry, while the circle is the Greek “O,” which stands for odont, or tooth.

In 1897, what was then called the National Association of Dental Faculties decided that lilac would be the official color of the profession. The shading within the triangle and circle of the design uses this color, as do dental schools and other dental emblems and banners. The letter “O” is generally gold, and the triangle is black. The rod is gold, and the figures are outlined in black to delineate them from the light-purple background.

Within the triangle and circle is the figure of a serpent encircling a rod flanked by leaves and berries. The numbers of leaves and berries are significant; the 32 leaves represent the number of permanent teeth, and the 20 berries represent the first teeth. The serpent is symbolic of Aesculapius, the Greek god of medicine. In the bottom of the “O,” the inscription simply reads DENTISTRY.

The origins of dentistry are ancient. As early as 5000 B.C., evidence from Sumeria notes that cavities may have been the result of tooth worms. Later, between 500 and 300 B.C., Hippocrates (considered the father of medicine) and Aristotle wrote about dentistry. It seems fitting that the dental insignia should include symbols dating back to man’s earliest attempts to cure dental caries.

GOOD EATING—even with dentures

A denture that doesn’t fit right or look natural can be a detriment to quality of life and even affect self-esteem. There are people who avoid certain foods and social situations because of discomfort and poor retention of their dentures.

Good nutrition is important to everyone’s health, and an ill-fitting denture can interfere with proper nutrition by causing the wearer to avoid certain foods. But food isn’t only about nutrition. There’s a pleasure in eating and social satisfaction in enjoying good food while chatting with family and friends. Many social situations include or even revolve around food. The denture wearer who is uncomfortable eating around others may shun such occasions, robbing him or her of social engagement and lowering self-confidence.

A better-fitting, -looking, and -functioning denture can change this scenario. Denture options, including partial plates, implant-supported retentive dentures, and implants can replace dentures that don’t fit well or don’t appear natural.

Denture wearers shouldn’t resign themselves to a life of isolation. Eating, talking, and overall quality of life can be improved with replacements for natural teeth that look, feel, and function more like your own.

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Office Hours

Monday 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.
Tuesday 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.
Wednesday
8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.
Thursday
8:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.
Friday 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

DENTAL FACT

Americans spend
**\$2 billion a year on
dental products—
toothpaste,
mouthwash, and
dental floss.**

Toothbrush bells and whistles

Fancy toothbrushes have become drugstore and supermarket staples, and there's plenty of evidence that they offer more efficient cleaning power than manual brushes. But are all the bells and whistles some of these high-tech tooth ticklers come with really worth the extra cash?

Probably not. That doesn't mean, however, that electric brushes don't offer advantages over manual versions. Power brushes have been shown to reduce the amount of plaque on teeth by a greater percentage than manual brushes. They are especially good choices for those suffering from gingivitis—the first stage of periodontal disease—because they remove plaque along the gum line more efficiently. In addition, power toothbrushes use just the right amount of pressure, so they don't encourage gum recession as overzealous brushers using a standard brush often do.

Power brushes are often the best way for those who have

arthritis or disabilities to brush efficiently. Children usually love electric brushes, and they may do a more effective job of brushing when using them. The rotating head and vibrating bristles are good at reaching into crevices where debris may be hidden and removing the bacteria that accumulate there.

In general, power brushes have a positive effect on the oral health of those who use them, but do the most expensive brushes with extra gadgetry really do enough to make them worth the price? Well, you probably don't need the built-in timer if you own a kitchen timer or can remember to hum through all three verses of your favorite song while brushing.

The best brush for you—power or manual—is the one we've recommended for your dental-health needs based on your individual care plan. We can evaluate your oral health and brushing technique and suggest a brush that can help you reach optimum dental health.

ORAL HEALTH IS FOR EVERYONE

There is no age at which oral health is no longer important. Throughout life, the health of one's teeth and oral tissues affects the enjoyment of food, speaking, smiling, and laughing. Neglecting dental health can lead to problems with digestion and a lack of self-esteem. Certain medical problems, such as diabetes and heart disease, may be linked to the health of one's teeth and gums. Gingivitis and periodontal disease are often among the first signs of diabetes.

Old restorations may break as a person ages, resulting in discomfort. Emergency dental care should be sought to restore the tooth and enable the patient to continue to eat, speak, and smile with ease.

The senior years are no time to neglect dental health. Good home care and professional care are both necessary to help keep teeth clean, healthy, and free of periodontal disease, which often results in tooth loss. Brushing thoroughly after meals and flossing daily should continue routinely. Regular dental checkups, on the schedule recommended specifically for you, are a must.

Oral-cancer checks are an essential part of any dental examination. The risk of oral cancer increases with age, and early detection can often save the patient's life.

Special dental problems that frequently occur with age include dry mouth caused by taking medications prescribed to lower cholesterol or reduce high blood pressure. Saliva is the mouth's

first line of defense against bacteria because it washes away both food debris and bacteria. A number of medications can cause a patient to produce less saliva, making him or her more susceptible to decay. Drinking plenty of plain water as often as possible coupled with good home care and regular professional care can alleviate this problem.

