

The Rickmansworth Dental Centre

Newsletter

Issue 4, Spring 2002

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Welcome to the fourth Rickmansworth Dental Centre Newsletter. Thank you for your positive feedback on the 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



It's been a busy few months at The Dental Centre. Spring has finally arrived. Don't forget we can also give your mouth a good spring clean. To help with this we have a new hygienist at the practice, but more of that later on.

We have now upgraded our x-ray developing. This means that we can view any x-rays in a much shorter time and the resulting image is better.

We are also in the process of refurbishing the reception.

New Arrival



Abigail Jane was born on 16th May. She is Adam and his wife, Natasha's third child. Despite a few complications and a bit of a traumatic start, Mother and baby are both doing well. Apologies if we had to rearrange your appointment at short notice.

Welcome

A big welcome to our new nurse, Vicky, who started with us earlier in the year.



Dental Hygienist

In May, Donna, a dental hygienist is started at the practice.

Hygienists are specially trained to carry out scaling and polishing of the teeth. They are also expert at teaching you how to look after your teeth and gums. If you would like to see the hygienist or would like further information, please contact The Dental Centre. There is also information about the hygienist and what she does on the back of



Tooth Whitening

Having seen great results with our 'at home' tooth whitening system, we have just started using an advanced formula, which promises to give even faster results.

Further information can be obtained from The Dental Centre.

Focus On Gum 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.

• What is gingivitis?

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.

• What is periodontal disease?

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.

• Am I likely to suffer from gum disease?

Probably. Most people suffer from some form of gum disease, and it is the major cause of tooth loss in adults. However, the disease develops very slowly in most people, and it can be slowed down to a rate that should allow you to keep most of your teeth for life.

• What is the cause of gum disease?

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. To prevent and treat gum disease, you need to make sure you remove all the plaque from your teeth every day. This is done by brushing and flossing.

• What happens if gum disease is not treated?

Unfortunately, gum disease progresses painlessly, on the whole so that you do not notice the damage it is doing. However, the bacteria are sometimes more active, and this makes your gums sore. This can lead to gum abscesses, and pus may ooze from around the teeth. Over a number of years, the bone

supporting the teeth can be lost. If the disease is left untreated for a long time, treatment can become more difficult.

• How do I know if I have gum disease?

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

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

The first thing to do is visit your 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?

Your 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.

• What else may be needed?

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.

• 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



Have a great Spring!

*Best Wishes from
Adam Deitsch
and all the staff.*



*Don't forget you can find us
online at
www.thedentalcentre.org*

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.