

THE DENTIST'S L E T T E R

Greetings!

My how time flies when you're having fun! I am so grateful to each of you for allowing my staff and me the opportunity to serve your dental needs. I can hardly believe that an impactful 10 years have elapsed already.

I must give special thanks to my wife **Melanie** and my daughters **Alexandria** and **Arryana**, for they have probably had to sacrifice the most during the past 10 years. I can't thank them enough for their understanding, prayers, and unending support. Their help and dedication have been, and continue to be, a tremendous blessing. As I reflect about the past 10 years, it certainly begins with service and serving your needs.

In order to service your needs, it requires a staff that is willing and able to meet the challenge. It has been a blessing to have successfully assembled a wonderful group of women who have helped make that possible. The staff, who meet, greet, receive, and answer questions, are the ones who make things happen. They are a group of dedicated ladies, and I certainly must thank them for serving your needs and providing special care and attention! **Adalyn Pretflow, Melanie Daniels, Shonda Garrett, Michelle Lamonica, Nancy Moxley, Crishonda Stephens, and Brenda Gonzales**—thank you, ladies, for everything.

While it is important to have the facility, the doctor and staff, the dental office, and the dental team are incomplete without the most important component: you, the patients, who complete our family unit. The past 10 years have given me an



opportunity to build relationships with those of you we serve. It has proven to be a wonderful experience that has allowed me to understand what your thoughts and desires are regarding your families' dental needs. It is and continues to be a pleasure and a blessing to serve you.

As we prepare to push forward, I'd like to start with our commitment to you that we will always try our absolute best to give you quality, evidence-based dentistry in a caring family environment; we owe that to you. Now, if you have not been to the office lately, we have undergone some renovations to promote an environment of warmth and stress reduction.

In closing, I am excited about what is happening in dentistry and the commitment we've made to reduce and eliminate oral disease and decay. I am glad to be on this journey with you and your families, for it is with pleasure we serve you. Our entire dental family joins together in saluting each of you for believing in us and supporting us. We so appreciate you for continuing to refer your family members, friends, and coworkers.

May God richly bless you this holiday season and throughout the coming new year.

Thank you for all your referrals. We appreciate them!

Battling bad breath

Bad breath (halitosis) can have a number of causes. Sometimes it is caused by factors that can be controlled, such as improving less-than-stellar home-care habits. In other cases, it's a medical condition, such as diabetes, that is the origin of the problem.

Dry mouth, for instance, is a common cause of halitosis. Dry mouth is sometimes the result of taking certain medications or using tobacco, and many people experience what is called "morning breath," which is due to a decreased flow of saliva during sleep.

Of course, certain foods have long been associated with foul-smelling breath. Among these are onions and garlic, which can enter the bloodstream and the lungs to affect the breath.

Poor oral-care habits, including not brushing and flossing regularly and failing to clean the tongue properly, can also contribute to bad breath. Gum disease, which is often related to poor oral hygiene, is also a prime factor.

Finding the underlying issue is the first step in solving a bad-breath problem. As oral-care professionals, we are uniquely suited to making this discovery. Bad breath is often a sign of an infection or other problem, which can be diagnosed and corrected. If you're experiencing regular halitosis, we can help. Fresh breath may be just an appointment away.



DENTAL DISTRESS



A substantial drop in the stock market can cause a significant rise in the stress levels of those who have their retirement accounts invested there. Stress can have a negative effect on health. It is well-known for the contributions it makes to increased risk of stroke and heart disease. These are serious illnesses, without a doubt, but the effects of stress on dental health can be serious as well.

Stress has long been associated with clenching one's teeth. Clenching and grinding can damage teeth and contribute to ear pain. They can also lead to temporomandibular joint (TMJ) problems, which can cause headaches and jaw pain.

Unfortunately, the dental problems associated with economic stress don't end with those caused by clenching. Often, when faced with declining finances, people will forego or postpone necessary dental work. Skipping cleanings and checkups can be a mistake. Without good preventive care, periodontal disease and dental caries may flourish, resulting in the need for expensive restorative work and even tooth loss.

Routine dental maintenance is always a bargain. Regular cleanings, checkups, and fluoride treatments for children can mean keeping teeth healthy and greatly reducing the chances of needing root-canal treatment or procedures to save the teeth from gum disease later in life.

During difficult times, it's important to spend wisely, and it's good to remember that the smart money is always on preventive dental care.

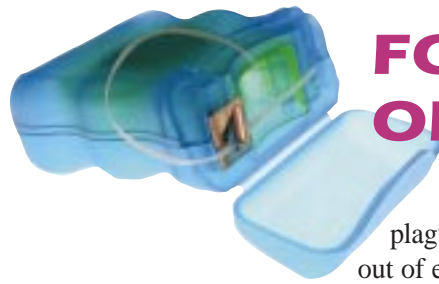
A question of erosion

Acid erosion of a tooth's enamel—the protective outer covering—is becoming a distinct problem for today's dental professionals. Acids from foods such as citrus fruits and beverages, including colas and sports drinks, attack enamel shortly after the food or drink is ingested.

Unfortunately, brushing after each meal, as has been recommended to fight tooth decay, is not the best solution for defeating erosion. This is because acids soften tooth enamel when they come into contact with the tooth's outer shell. Brushing within an hour or less of eating or drinking something acidic could actually result in more erosion. Instead, rinse with plain water immediately after ingesting an acidic food or drink, and brush about an hour later.

Loss of tooth enamel is permanent. Damaged enamel cannot be repaired. Worse yet, teeth that have lost some of their protective covering are more susceptible to decay.

Therefore, it's wise to avoid or at least limit exposure to acidic foods, especially beverages. Fluoride, because it helps to harden enamel, can be used in conjunction with smart food choices to aid youngsters in avoiding erosion problems as they grow.



FOUR OUT OF FIVE

Gum disease is the dental plague of our times. It affects four out of every five of us, and most of those who have gum disease are blissfully unaware of its presence. Perhaps worse, they don't realize how often gum disease leads to tooth loss.

Gum, or periodontal, disease is a silent destroyer of the bone underlying the teeth. It is caused by plaque that remains on teeth after brushing. Flossing daily is one of the most important steps that can be taken to prevent gum disease, since flossing removes bacteria that congregate between teeth and lead to bone loss.

Certain people have an increased chance of developing periodontal disease. Sometimes the factors that contribute to this elevated risk are controllable. These include using tobacco in any form or neglecting oral hygiene. Factors that are more difficult to control include crowded teeth and diseases such as diabetes or AIDS. Certain medications, particularly those used to fight cancer or to control high blood pressure, can lead to dry mouth, which makes the oral environment more hospitable to plaque.



The first dental floss, manufactured in 1882, was made of silk.

When did you grow that sweet tooth?

If you find yourself craving sweets every day, it's likely that you were ingesting sugary foods during your earliest years. Evidence has shown that the foods a child is given when teeth are first erupting are likely to affect his or her dietary choices for years to come. High-sugar cereals and sweetened juices for toddlers may turn into a diet of soda and candy later on, according to some researchers.

Once a child begins to eat solid food, he or she begins to form dietary habits that could affect his or her dental health later in life. Teeth that are frequently exposed to sugar may also be subjected to an abundance of bacteria which excrete acids that lead to decay.

Baby teeth do not have the hardened enamel of second teeth and lack protection against acids, making them more susceptible to decay.

To avoid decay in first teeth and help a child develop good eating habits, be careful to give a child only plain water to drink, except at mealtimes. Never put a child down for a nap or at bedtime with a bottle containing anything but water. Limit juice consumption, and don't douse a pacifier with juice or other sweet substances.

Children who need to take medication often suffer more tooth decay, so if your child must take liquid medication, be sure he or she rinses with water and then brushes gently afterward.

Minimizing your child's exposure to sugar-laden foods early in life could mean a healthier mouth and diet for a lifetime. Choose what you feed your baby wisely. After all, his or her smile could depend on it.

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dental newsletter!*

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SENSITIVE TO SLS?

Many people who suffer more than their fair share of mouth ulcers may discover that they could alleviate the problem by choosing a different toothpaste. A preliminary study conducted by two Norwegian researchers showed a 60 percent reduction in the incidence of ulcers in patients

who switched pastes. The problem, researchers suspect, may be related to a toothpaste ingredient called sodium lauryl sulfate, or SLS.

SLS is used in a number of toothpaste products as an emulsifier and to cause the paste to foam up when you brush with it. Unfortunately, some patients seem to be sensitive to the ingredient, and this may cause them to be more susceptible to mouth ulcers.

If you're plagued by mouth ulcers, choosing a toothpaste without SLS may make a difference. A number of brands do not contain the offending ingredient. Ask us to recommend one that may work better for you.

PUT SOME POWER IN YOUR SMILE!

Do you want a smile that lights up the room?

You can turn up your smile wattage with power whitening. This unique whitening process uses light-activated gels to produce dazzling results.

The whitening begins with a complete cleaning that removes any plaque or tartar clinging to teeth. That procedure is followed by an application of a whitening gel, which is cured under a laser or other high-intensity light. Each section of the mouth is treated, rinsed, and may be treated again for maximum effectiveness.

If you truly want whiter teeth, ask us about power whitening. Although each case is different, we have seen many smiles go from blah to bright. Why shouldn't yours be one of them?

**About half of
us claim that a
person's smile is
the first thing
we notice
about him
or her.**



**Produced for the patients of
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Office Hours

Monday-Thursday

7:30 a.m.-6:00 p.m.

*(Lunch hour for the office is
1:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m.)*

Appointment and Emergency

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