

THE DENTIST'S L E T T E R

Winter 2010/11

Produced for
the patients of
**Blue Diamond Dental,
P.A.**

**Vincent J. Daniels,
D.M.D.**

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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 Phone:**
302-655-8387

DENTAL TEAM

Office Business Manager
Melanie Daniels

**Front Desk
& Clinical Coordinator:**
Adalyn Pretlow

Front Desk Coordinator:
Brenda Gonzales-Ortega

**Registered Dental
Hygienists:**
Nancy Moxley
Shonda Garrett

Dental Assistants:
Michelle Lamonica
Stacey Heggan

Office update...

Well, what a wild and crazy year this has been, locally, nationally, and internationally. As we close this year, we hope 2011 will be a less wild and crazy year and more of a great and blessed one! At **Blue Diamond Dental**, we know and understand that it begins and ends with each of you, our patients. It is you who motivate us to do more, care more, and be more as your oral health-care providers. Thanks to each one of you for trusting my team and me with your husbands, wives, children, extended family, neighbors, friends, and coworkers. Our mission continues to be one of service and serving your dental needs on an individual basis.

This year was a very busy one for us, and it looks like 2011 will be just as busy. Many dental insurances are changing their coverage, employers have been changing their dental plans, and patients are confused about what the insurance pays versus what they have to pay. If you are confused by all of this information, please feel free to give us a call. We have an amazing front desk staff that would be happy to spend time with you going over the details of your plan and/or any significant changes to your plan you may not be aware of.

I have continued to be blessed with a staff that is willing and able to meet the needs of all our patients. It has been exciting to have successfully assembled a wonderful group of women who have helped make it all possible. The staff who meet your dental needs have changed over the last year, but they truly are the ones who make things happen. They are a group of dedicated ladies, and I certainly must thank them for serving your needs! **Melanie Daniels**—Office Business Manager; **Adalyn Pretlow**—Front Desk and Clinical Coordinator; **Brenda Gonzalez-Ortega**—Front Desk Coordinator; **Nancy Moxley**—Registered Dental Hygienist; **Shonda Garrett**—our new Registered Nurse Practitioner and Registered Dental Hygienist; **Michelle Lamonica**—



Certified Dental Assistant; and Stacey Heggan—our new Dental Assistant team member. Thank you, ladies, for everything you do and the level of excellence with which you perform on a daily basis.

As we bring another year to a close and embark on an exciting new one, I'd like to state that in our commitment to serve you, we will always try our absolute best to give you quality, evidence-based dentistry in a caring family environment; we owe that to you. Throughout the year, we attend multiple continuing dental education courses and participate in study clubs. Additionally, just this past October, the staff and I attended the American Dental Association Annual Session. We will be incorporating some of the new information we gleaned from our courses into your overall dental experience in the very near future.

In closing, I am excited about what is happening in dentistry and the commitment we've made to treat and eliminate oral disease and decay, incorporating up-to-date information and technology to give each of you a high-tech, high-touch dental experience. I am glad to be on this journey with you and your family, for it is with pleasure that 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 coming year and always!

Thank you for all your referrals. We appreciate them!

What does your smile say about you?

A smile can say a lot about a person. An inviting grin can suggest a warm and friendly personality, but dental professionals can see even more in your smile. The eyes may be the windows to the soul, but the mouth is full of clues to a patient's health.

The fact that teeth are susceptible to cavities is no mystery, but diseases such as diabetes and osteoporosis can also manifest themselves in the mouth. According to at least one study, more than 60 percent of baby boomers exhibit symptoms in their mouths that may be related to a systemic health problem. These same patients were completely unaware that they might be facing such a health issue.

Regular dental checkups can bring these initial warning signs of serious disease to light. For instance, jaw pain has been linked to heart disease, and gum disease can be an early sign of diabetes. Dental professionals are trained to be alert to these signals and to make the appropriate referrals when symptoms warrant.



The dangers of bleeding gums

So your gums bleed a little when you brush...everyone's do, right?

Nope, that's not the case. Pink, healthy gums should be the norm.

When flossing, brushing, or eating causes your gums to bleed, it should be a cause for concern. The blood that you see around your gums and in the sink when you rinse is a sign of bacterial infection caused by gingivitis, one of the first signs of periodontal disease.

Periodontal, or gum, disease can ravage the mouth. Left untreated, bacteria invade pockets beneath the gum line. Eventually, the bacteria break down the structures that hold teeth in place, causing the teeth to loosen and fall out.

Of course, losing teeth can affect your speech, eating habits, and your smile, but that may not be the worst result of periodontal disease. Expectant mothers who suffer from periodontal disease may give birth to low-birthweight babies. Other serious medical conditions linked to gum disease include diabetes, osteoporosis, heart disease, and respiratory disease.

One theory about these connections involves the bacteria that cause gum disease to travel from the mouth to other areas of the body. More than 80 percent of heart attack patients have been found to have some form of periodontal disease.

To battle periodontal disease in its earliest stages, treat it like the serious issue it is. Brushing after each meal and flossing well daily are good places to start. Call your dentist for an appointment and discuss this issue. A thorough examination should reveal the extent of the problem and help to determine an effective treatment plan.

Fortunately for those who suffer from periodontal disease, a variety of conservative treatments are available. The simplest is diligent home care, which may form the first line of defense. Mouth rinses and antibiotics combined with deep cleanings may also be recommended. Laser treatments are sometimes utilized as well. Surgery is becoming a last resort.

Bleeding gums are usually the first sign of periodontal disease. The good news is, if the problem is treated quickly and aggressively, it can often be controlled to avoid tooth loss and more dire consequences.



Anatomy of a cavity

Many of us have had at least one cavity, but some youngsters have never had any. Tooth decay is one of the most common ailments known to mankind, but few people truly understand how cavities get a foothold in a tooth. Take this quiz to see how much you really know about how cavities form.

Please choose the best answer.

1.

Bacteria found in the mouth live...

- a. between teeth, on the gums, and on the tongue
- b. in colonies
- c. happily
- d. both a and b

2.

Bacteria that's not removed will...

- a. produce acid
- b. multiply and grow
- c. attach themselves to the teeth
- d. all of the above

3.

Sugar...

- a. gives the bacteria energy
- b. causes them to multiply more quickly
- c. helps bacteria to adhere to teeth
- d. all of the above

4.

The enamel is...

- a. the outer covering of the tooth
- b. very hard
- c. susceptible to penetration by acids
- d. all of the above

5.

Plaque is made up of...

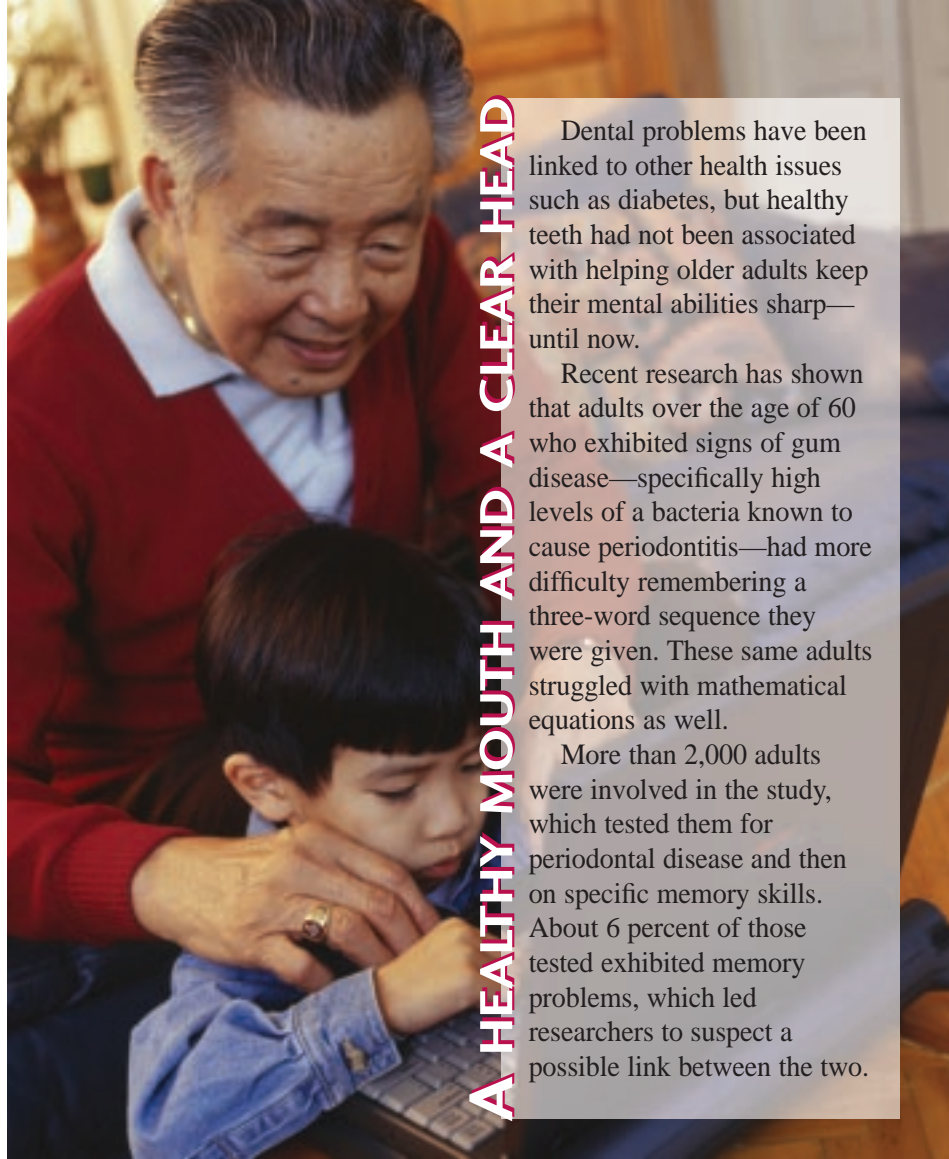
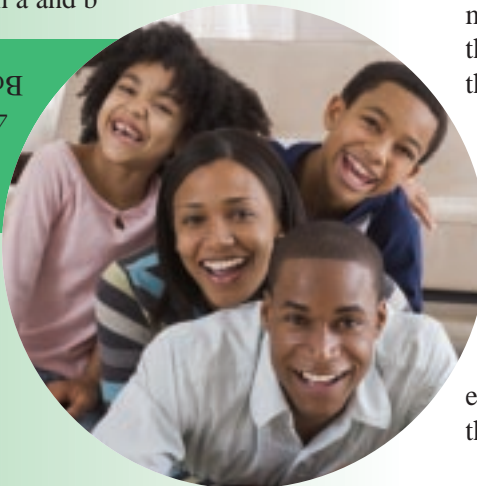
- a. sugar
- b. bacteria and proteins found naturally in the mouth
- c. debris that isn't brushed or flossed away
- d. none of the above

BONUS QUESTION

As enamel is bathed in acid...

- a. the surface of the tooth weakens
- b. tiny holes appear
- c. gums recede
- d. both a and b

Answers:
1. d; 2. d; 3. d;
4. d; 5. b
Bonus: d



A HEALTHY MOUTH AND A CLEAR HEAD

Dental problems have been linked to other health issues such as diabetes, but healthy teeth had not been associated with helping older adults keep their mental abilities sharp—until now.

Recent research has shown that adults over the age of 60 who exhibited signs of gum disease—specifically high levels of a bacteria known to cause periodontitis—had more difficulty remembering a three-word sequence they were given. These same adults struggled with mathematical equations as well.

More than 2,000 adults were involved in the study, which tested them for periodontal disease and then on specific memory skills. About 6 percent of those tested exhibited memory problems, which led researchers to suspect a possible link between the two.

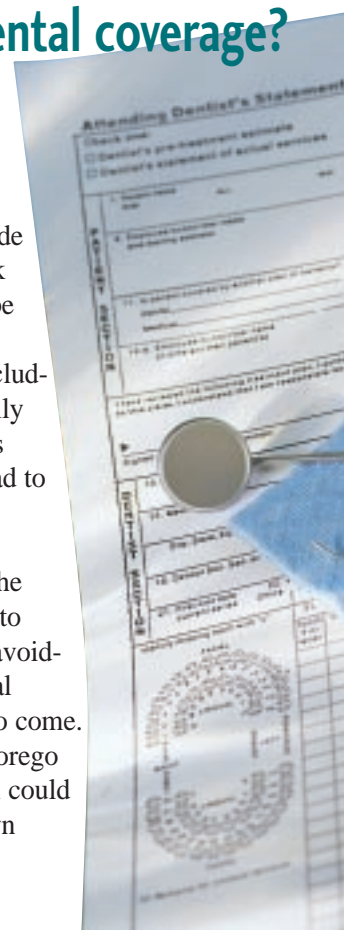
Should you hold on to your dental coverage?

As employers increasingly look for ways to curb costs, many are asking employees to pay a larger percentage of the monthly dental premium. Many employees struggle to decide whether this is a smart move for them. Unfortunately, most people who decide against paying for dental insurance usually don't seek the preventive dental care they need. The result can be disastrous for their teeth and their wallets.

Dental insurance that provides preventive care, including checkups every six months, can often save a family money in the long run. Problems such as tiny cavities that are allowed to grow and fester can eventually lead to the need for expensive crowns or, worse, tooth loss.

Having regular preventive checkups can mean avoiding the ravages of gum disease and keeping the teeth that allow you to speak and eat efficiently into your old age. For children, prevention can mean avoiding cavities entirely while learning the good dental habits that can help keep them smiling for years to come.

Consider the costs before deciding whether to forego dental insurance. A few dollars worth of prevention could easily save you many dollars in restorative work down the road.



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*Here's your
dental newsletter!*

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Premedication edification

The need for premedication to battle infective endocarditis in certain patients has been debated often over the years. This infection of the lining of the heart has been known to cause damage to or even destroy the valves of the heart. It can occur when bacteria enter the bloodstream and travel to the heart, where they may infect damaged heart valves.

The bacteria that cause infective endocarditis are generally present in the mouth and other parts of the body. Should these bacteria migrate from the mouth into the bloodstream and reach the damaged heart valves, problems could result. For years many patients were given prophylactic antibiotics prior to dental and other medical procedures to reduce their chances of developing bacterial endocarditis.

Research, however, has caused the American Heart Association (AHA) to take a different stand on the use of prophylactic antibiotics. In light of mounting evidence that problems associated with taking the antibiotics might override the benefits derived, the AHA concluded that only those with the highest risk of developing infective endocarditis should receive antibiotics. Among these are patients who have a history of endocarditis, those who have artificial heart valves, patients with certain congenital heart problems, those who have recently undergone specific heart-related procedures, and those with artificial joints.

If you fall into one of these high-risk groups, be sure to let us know so that the appropriate action may be taken before you arrive at our office for your dental procedure.



Can we talk?

Those who suffer from dental anxiety often avoid preventive care and necessary procedures. Unfortunately, by not visiting the dental office, they may be unaware of advances in diagnosis and treatment that have made patient visits more comfortable.

One way to conquer anxiety is through knowledge. Understanding what's involved in dental tests, procedures, and treatments can help patients to relax. Patients who talk to their dentists about how they feel will have the opportunity to become informed about diagnostic procedures or treatments required, or the types of medications, analgesics, or anesthetic methods, such as nitrous oxide, that are available.

Armed with this knowledge, patients can make informed choices about what's best for their teeth in light of any anxiety they may feel.

Easy does it!

At our dental practice, we like to take a flexible approach to working with patients who have dental anxiety. We can adjust the timing of a procedure to better meet your needs, performing treatment one stage at a time to help increase your comfort level.

Some patients don't like the lack of control they feel when undergoing treatment. We can work out a signal system that will help us to be more sensitive to your needs during procedures.

Talk to us

Some patients who experience dental anxiety have had a negative experience in the past. If you have a particular concern, talk to us. We'd like to make the dental chair your easy chair. We want to be sure you receive the treatment you need to keep your mouth healthy in a way that is comfortable and nonthreatening.