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Smiles *for life*

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

Fall 2010

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



***The end of the
year will be
here before
you know it...***

*Don't let your flexible
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insurance benefits go
to waste.*

*Call us today to
schedule an appoint-
ment before the end
of the year.*

Eating vegan means watching your nutritional intake

People who choose to become vegetarians do so for myriad reasons. Some choose to avoid all meat and animal products, while others abstain from meat, but still ingest eggs and dairy foods.

Whatever your reason for choosing to become a vegetarian, it's important to understand the ways that eating only vegetables can impact your dental health.

If you're eating a vegetarian diet, but not paying proper attention to whether or not you are getting all the vitamins and minerals you need, you may be lacking in those essentials. This can lead to increased susceptibility to gum disease, which can eventually cause tooth loss.

To avoid this problem, be sure to eat a balanced diet that can supply necessary nutrients. Consider a multivitamin to cover any vitamins or minerals not found in abundance in the foods you eat. Vegetarians are especially at risk for deficiencies in vitamin D and B12, as well as calcium. Many cereals are good sources of B12. Your need for vitamin D can often be fulfilled by foods such as tofu or soy milk, and beans and oats are high in necessary calcium.

Eating a diet that includes a variety of fruits, vegetables, beans, and grains can help you get the nutrition your teeth, and body, need to stay healthy and strong.



Why you should become *a fan of floss*



Flossing is one of the best ways to remove plaque from the in-between spaces. The idea behind flossing is to reach places your toothbrush cannot. Areas between teeth and under the gumline are often teeming with bacteria that feed on food debris hidden there. These bacteria are responsible for decay, periodontal disease, and bad breath.

Flossing daily can remove food particles and bacteria to prevent problems such as cavities and gingivitis (the earliest stage of gum disease). Gingivitis can cause the gums to bleed, and, without treatment, it can progress to periodontal disease. When periodontal disease is allowed to develop unchecked, it will attack the jawbone as well as the gums, destroying the foundation by which the teeth are supported. The result is tooth loss.

Get friendly with that little floss container in your bathroom cabinet or with a flossing implement designed to make flossing easier. Avoid the nightmare of losing teeth. Flossing daily can help to keep your teeth healthier, which can be good for your overall health as well. Studies have shown that those who floss as recommended have less plaque and tartar on their teeth and may be less likely to suffer from a heart attack or stroke. Add flossing before bedtime to your daily schedule. It will give you a reason to smile!

PREVENT dental trouble

There are many things in life over which we have no control. Fortunately, there are many things we can do to help keep our teeth healthy. By following a good home-care regimen, we can help to ensure the health of our mouths.

Preventing dental problems begins anew each morning. Brushing thoroughly for at least four to five minutes with a soft brush and a fluoride toothpaste after breakfast gets things off to a smart start.

If possible, brush again after lunch, but at least rinse well with water to help remove food debris and sticky sugars that adhere to teeth. Chewing gum that is sweetened with xylitol or sorbitol about 20 minutes after eating can stimulate saliva production to help quell bacterial activity as well.

After dinner, it's time to floss, and then to brush again. Daily flossing can remove debris that hides where the toothbrush can't reach—namely, between teeth.

Enjoy nature's sweets when you eat. Grapes, oranges, bananas, and many other delicious fruits are far easier on teeth than sugar-laden sweets and processed foods loaded with hidden sugars. Sweets aren't as much of a treat if you eat them all the time. Save them for special occasions.

Not only is practicing good preventive care beneficial for our mouths, it can also help save money by avoiding the need for restorative procedures or the cost of dentures. Taking steps to ward off decay and periodontal disease makes sense for our dental health and our pocketbooks.

What's one less tooth?

If you still have all your teeth, you may not think giving up a single tooth will be any big deal. As long as it's not a front tooth, it's not like anyone will notice, right?

WRONG. *You* will notice every time you eat. Loss of a tooth can interfere with speaking as well as eating. The teeth on either side of the gap a lost tooth leaves behind will not stay well anchored once the support of the missing tooth is gone. These teeth may change position and tilt into the open space. Sometimes your bite will be affected, and the front teeth may begin to protrude.

Instead of allowing all this to happen, it's best to care for your teeth in accordance with the recommendations made by your dentist. This will include regular brushing and flossing, the use of fluoride, dental checkups on a specific schedule, and keeping sweets to a minimum.

Should an adult tooth become damaged—either by decay, an accident, or because it was heavily filled when you were a child—it may be necessary to remove it. When a tooth can't be saved by root canal treatment, often a bridge, implant, or partial denture can close the gap to avoid future trouble.

One less tooth can result in a domino effect yielding a multitude of problems that can eventually affect your quality of life. Don't let that happen when there are so many ways to prevent tooth loss or close the gap when tooth loss is unavoidable.

Soda is so bad... FOR YOUR TEETH

Call it soda, pop, or tonic, but a carbonated beverage by any name is still a carbonated beverage—and it's still bad for your teeth.

Canned soda, whether it contains sugar or a sugar substitute, is an agent of erosion. Acid in these drinks slowly works away at the enamel on teeth, allowing decay to get a foothold. The colorings in these drinks can stain teeth as well.

The problem is, sodas and some sports drinks contain large amounts of an ingredient called phosphorus. Phosphorus is strong enough to eat away at teeth and bone. When coupled with the sugars found in most soft drinks, you have a recipe for disaster.

Even when decay doesn't become an issue, the teeth of those who consume large amounts of soda take on the dingy appearance of age. This can happen even when the soda drinker is relatively young.

No one wants to grow old before their time, but heavy soda drinkers may be watching their smiles age prematurely each time they grin into the mirror.

Instead of watching your smile race ahead of the rest of you to grow older, why not break the soda habit and pick up a drink that's better for your teeth and the rest of you: plain water. Water is good for your teeth, your waistline, and your entire body. It can help rinse food debris from the mouth and replenish your system with necessary fluids. Make the switch from soda to water. It will give you something to smile about.



THE DESERT IN YOUR MOUTH

Imagine feeling parched. Your throat is dry, and your mouth is continually aching for a cold drink. For four million people who suffer from Sjögren's syndrome, a perpetual dry feeling in the mouth is an everyday occurrence.

Sjögren's is an autoimmune disease in which the body attacks its own salivary glands. When this happens, the salivary glands may swell, and saliva may begin to thicken and feel sticky.

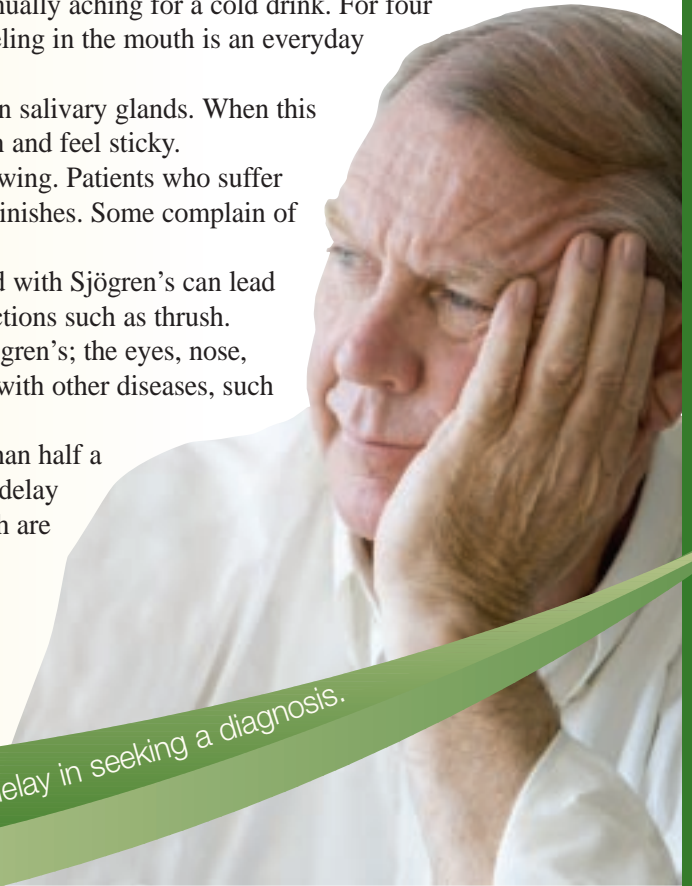
Additional symptoms include difficulty talking, chewing, and swallowing. Patients who suffer from Sjögren's often lose their appetite as their ability to taste food diminishes. Some complain of a burning tongue, and often the tongue becomes sore or cracks.

Along with these uncomfortable symptoms, the dry mouth associated with Sjögren's can lead to tooth sensitivity, an increase in the likelihood of decay, and oral infections such as thrush.

The mouth is not the only part of the body that will feel dry with Sjögren's; the eyes, nose, and skin may be dry as well. Patients with Sjögren's are often afflicted with other diseases, such as lupus, scleroderma, or rheumatoid arthritis.

Unfortunately, many Sjögren's patients are not diagnosed for more than half a decade. Patients who suffer with discomfort in their mouths should not delay in seeking a diagnosis and treatment. Oftentimes, problems in the mouth are keys to undiagnosed diseases.

Dental professionals can play an important role in helping to treat patients with Sjögren's and other diseases affecting the mouth. Patients experiencing mouth problems should discuss them with their dentist.



Patients who suffer with discomfort in their mouths should not delay in seeking a diagnosis.

HEALTHY from the start

Every tooth a child grows is important to his or her ability to chew and speak properly. Keeping every one of those teeth healthy for a lifetime begins with practicing good dental habits in early childhood.

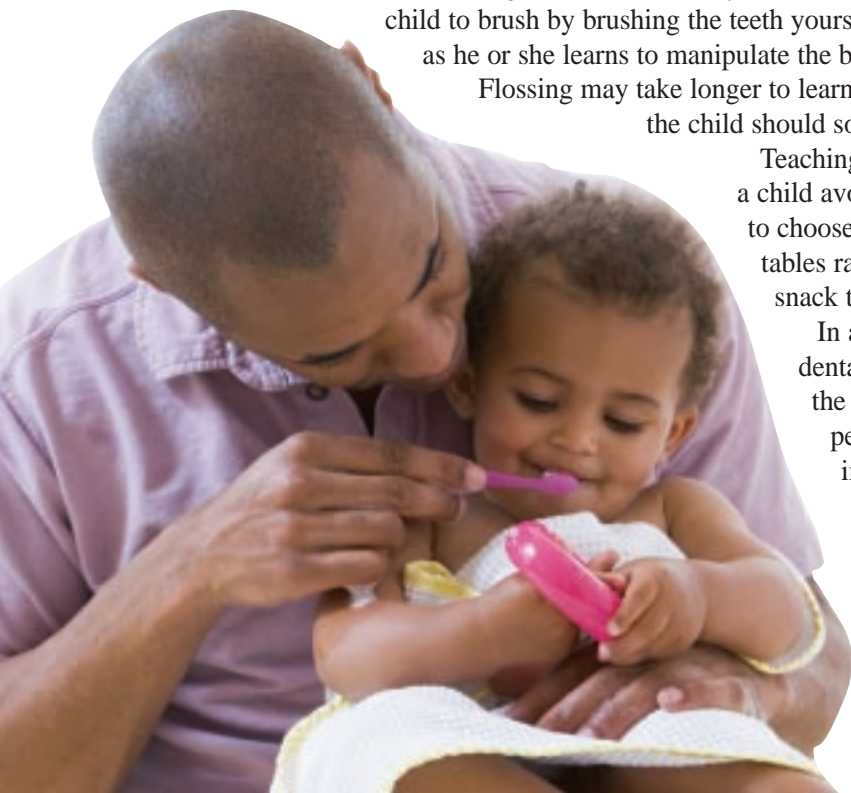
Brushing at least twice a day and flossing daily should be taught as soon as possible. Teach the child to brush by brushing the teeth yourself with a soft brush and slowly letting the child take over as he or she learns to manipulate the brush handle.

Flossing may take longer to learn, but by starting with a safe, handheld flossing implement, the child should soon be able to master this important daily ritual as well.

Teaching that sugary snacks are only an occasional treat may help a child avoid unwanted cavities and added pounds. Teach him or her to choose plain water rather than soda, and fresh fruits and vegetables rather than foods containing processed sugars. Cheese is a snack that can help prevent decay while providing calcium.

In addition to teaching healthy habits, you can help avoid dental caries by making sure the child has regular dental visits, the recommended fluoride, and preventive resin restoration per professional recommendation. If your child is involved in sports, be sure he or she uses an athletic guard along with other protective gear.

Perhaps most importantly, model good dental health habits for your child. Those little eyes are watching you and mimicking your behavior. When you make good choices for yourself, you encourage them in your child as well.



Elsabet Tekle, D.D.S.
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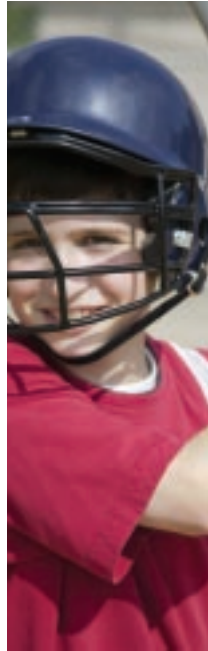
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Office Hours

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	By appointment only

THE RIGHT GUARD



Mouthguards can reduce a child's chances of sustaining a mouth injury by up to 60 times. The likelihood that the front teeth will suffer permanent injury will be diminished, and the risk of a tooth or jaw fracture will decrease.

A mouthguard that's customized to fit a child's mouth will offer the best protection. It's also important to choose a sport-specific guard that provides the amount of protection that's necessary. Basketball and softball are sports that require a universal guard. Sports such as baseball and racquetball require heavy protection, and hockey—whether field, ice, or street—calls for maximum protection.

A custom-fitted mouthguard will be both comfortable and functional. Mouth discomfort and ulcers associated with boil-and-bite guards will not be issues with a guard that fits the child's jaws and teeth like it was made for them...because it was.

Mouthguards should be worn whenever practicing or training so that the mouth and teeth are protected at all times. Costs associated with an injury that results in a knocked-out tooth can mean expenses of many thousands of dollars over a lifetime. Investing in a custom mouthguard now could save a great deal of money later.

Do adults need fluoride?

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.

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.

Oh, what DIGITAL can do!

Digital radiography provides numerous advantages to dental patients. For instance, there's decreased radiation exposure for patients and clearer photos for us to examine and use in our diagnoses.

Because digital equipment is more sensitive than traditional x-rays, less radiation is emitted to produce higher-quality photos—as much as 80 percent less. There's no waiting for film to be developed because the photos appear almost instantly, and with color contrast, we can easily see what's happening inside your teeth.

Digital x-rays can be shared more easily with our patients and with other professionals. Used in conjunction with traditional examinations, digital x-rays can help us provide patients with better service.

