



Smiles *for life*

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STEVEN PARKER, D.D.S.,
HAVE JOINED PRACTICES**

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

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Root canal— *it's not what you think!*

Root canal procedures performed by dentists have saved countless teeth for patients, allowing them to go on speaking and eating with ease and without fear that their teeth will shift because a tooth was extracted. Unfortunately, many patients have a negative view of this tooth-saving procedure.

It seems that root canals have an image problem. We'd like to help change that by discussing some of the benefits of this important technique.

First, root canals aren't what they used to be. Because of advances in dental technology, root canals are less complicated and more comfortable procedures than they once were. In other words, this is not your father's root canal.

Second, root canals are performed selectively. Only when the nerve tissue and pulp of a tooth are infected or extensively damaged is a root canal called for. A trauma to a tooth or a case in which decay has infiltrated the innermost part of the tooth commonly requires a root canal.

Third, by preserving teeth, root canal procedures also preserve the integrity of the mouth. A jaw that has more natural teeth intact is more likely to remain healthy. A root canal can relieve discomfort and allow you to keep your tooth for years to come.



Wedding white

On their wedding day, they'll both want to put their best smiles forward. Both the bride and the groom will want to look their best and smile their brightest. Being comfortable that one's smile is as white as it can be will give a person the confidence to beam their brightest.

Making sure teeth look their best is a goal that can be achieved in a number of ways. Daily oral hygiene, which includes brushing, flossing, and using a fluoride rinse, is a good start, but it's only the beginning. Drinking plenty of plain water and eating lots of raw vegetables are also recommended.

Professional treatments which can lighten teeth by up to six shades can improve the look of stained teeth. Teeth that are chipped or dark-colored can often be treated with bonding or covered with a porcelain veneer or crown.

On their wedding day, both the bride and groom should be ready to flash smiles that let their family and friends know how truly happy they are. If you're about to tie the knot, talk to us about all the ways to whiten your teeth so that you can look and feel your best on that most special of days.



Thank you for all your referrals. We appreciate them!

EMERGENCY!

Dental emergencies can be scary, and, sadly, many Americans don't know what action to take should one occur. In a recent study, about 20 percent of those who had experienced a dental emergency within the 12 months preceding the study did nothing in response to the situation. Dental emergencies include problems such as broken or knocked-out teeth, pain in the mouth, broken or lost fillings, caps or crowns that become loose or fall off, damaged dentures, or braces that irritate oral tissues.

Dental emergencies generally call for temporary action followed by professional treatment. For instance, if a tooth falls out, it should be placed back into the socket, and immediate treatment should be sought. Mouth pain, often the result of a toothache caused by an infection, may be alleviated temporarily with an over-the-counter topical analgesic until a dentist can be seen.

Teeth with broken or lost fillings should be gently cleansed by rinsing with warm water. A temporary filling material can be pressed into the opening in the tooth for a short time until a dentist is seen. The same material can be used to help hold a crown in place. Damages to dentures, such as cracks or fractures, can often be repaired temporarily using a repair kit from the drugstore, but most denture wearers should have a spare set to use while their dentures are being repaired. Problems with pain from braces can often be handled with orthodontic wax, which can be purchased at a pharmacy.

All these solutions are simply a temporary means to solve a dental emergency. Professional dental treatment is always the best solution. Don't delay in taking recommended temporary measures, but seek help from a dental professional as soon as possible.



Under the ENAMEL.....

The enamel is the hard outer covering of each tooth. The enamel is the part of the tooth that we brush, floss, and see reflected in the mirror each morning. However, under the enamel are other parts of the tooth, and each part fulfills an important role in the function of the mouth.

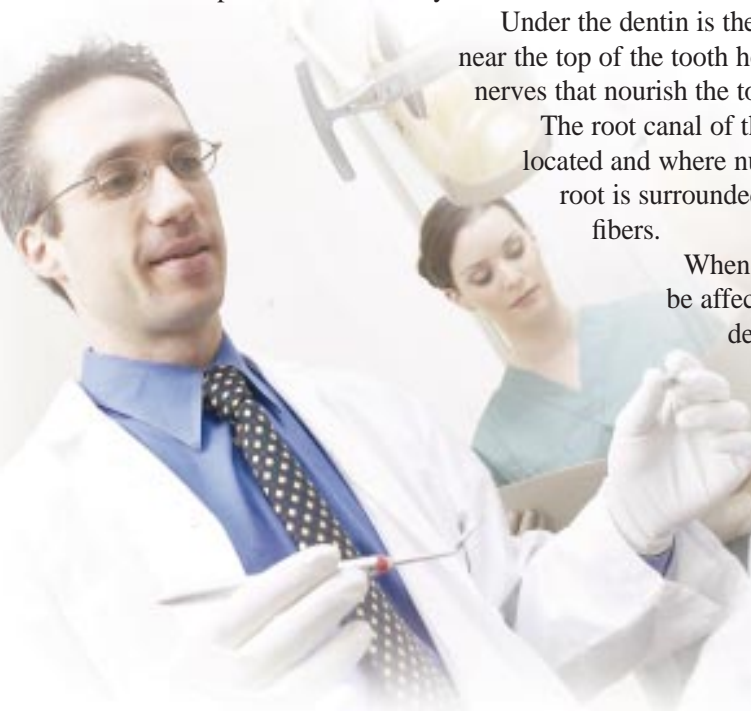
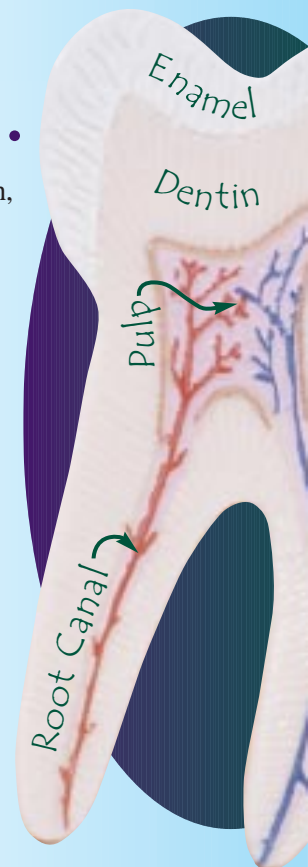
Just below the enamel is the dentin. The dentin is not as hard as the enamel, and it is more susceptible to tooth decay.

Under the dentin is the pulp chamber. The connective tissue in this area near the top of the tooth holds the blood, arteries, veins, lymph vessels, and nerves that nourish the tooth.

The root canal of the tooth is the chamber in which the nerves are located and where nutrients and blood are supplied to the tooth. The root is surrounded by bone and held in place by ligaments and fibers.

When a tooth is compromised by decay, the first part to be affected is the enamel, where a process called demineralization begins to occur. As this process continues, the hard enamel begins to give way. Once decay reaches the dentin, it can easily and rapidly spread to the pulp, causing infection, swelling, and sometimes even an opening (fistula) through the gum.

When decay is caught early, before it penetrates the enamel, fluoride treatment can help the tooth to repair itself. However, once decay breaks through the enamel surface, restoration will be necessary to prevent further decay. If decay reaches the pulp chamber and the nerve, a root canal may be required to save the tooth.



Losing that first tooth

On average, most first teeth are lost during the year the child is in first grade. Some children lose them a little earlier, and some lose them a little later. Often, children whose teeth appear earlier in their mouths lose them sooner. Most children, however, have all 20 of their teeth by the time they reach 30 months of age.

Front teeth are lost according to a schedule that runs the opposite of the way they came in. The bottom teeth in the center usually come out first, followed by the two top front teeth. The incisors are next, followed by the first molars, the canines, and then the second primary molars. Generally, all a child's baby teeth will have fallen out by the time he or she becomes a teenager.

Secondary teeth do not wait for a child to hit double digits. Second teeth begin to push through the gums as soon as the first baby teeth disappear. However, all the secondary teeth may not appear until the late teens or early 20s. Wisdom teeth often come in between the ages of 17 and 22; however, impacted wisdom teeth may never appear at all.

Losing a first tooth is a milestone and certainly a reason to celebrate. Whether you plan a special treat or leave money under a child's pillow, be sure to mark the occasion with the attention it deserves.



Ouch!..... Overly sensitive teeth

Dealing with a friend or relative who is overly sensitive can be a touchy situation, but when your teeth are overly sensitive, it can be downright painful.

Dental hypersensitivity is widespread, affecting millions of adults. In fact, dentists hear from a lot of those people during regular visits. Some folks experience the discomfort associated with tooth sensitivity during their 20s, but for many the problem begins later on. Canines and premolars—toward the front of the mouth—are the teeth most often affected.

Tooth sensitivity occurs when nerves in the pulp chamber of the tooth, surrounded by dentin and found just beneath the enamel, react to the outside stimuli of hot or cold. Oftentimes, hot or cold beverages such as hot coffee or iced drinks cause a reaction, but ice cream and other foods can create discomfort as well.

Oversensitivity in teeth is more common with age due to a number of factors, including gum recession, normal wearing of the enamel, and a tendency to brush too hard.

Fortunately, there are treatments for overly sensitive teeth, including fluorides, adhesive agents, and special pastes, that can help to decrease the discomfort. Don't think that tooth sensitivity is simply a by-product of growing older which one must live with. Ask us for suggestions that may help to relieve the "ouch."

CATCHING ORAL CANCER EARLY

Oral cancer does not get a lot of press, but it is one of the more deadly cancers, killing, on average, more than a quarter of those it afflicts. Fortunately, a thorough clinical examination of the mouth, lips, and neck can help detect precancerous areas long before they become a serious issue to determine whether a lesion needs to be watched closely or what other treatment may be recommended.

Regular dental checkups can help to prevent cancers because dentists are trained to spot the small red or white spots that appear suspicious. However, patients should also know to watch for changes in oral tissues with regard to color or texture. Lumps, thickened areas, or a sore that does not heal and tends to bleed can all be cause for concern. Problems with speaking, chewing, swallowing, or with normal motions of the tongue or jaw should also be reported.

In the United States alone, one person dies every hour from oral cancer. Twenty-five percent of these persons have no risk factors. Risk factors associated with oral cancer include age, tobacco use, extended sun exposure, and alcohol use.



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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.

How do your teeth mesh?

“Malocclusion” is the name given to the problem of teeth not meeting or “meshing” together the way they should. Often this problem is corrected with braces. However, many people don’t realize that malocclusions are not just an aesthetic problem.

Malocclusions can result in loosening of the teeth, excessive wearing of the teeth, tooth sensitivity, and grinding of the teeth. Some patients experience broken crowns or teeth, and pain in the jaw muscles and the joint.

Having a smile you can feel confident about is important, but there are more reasons to correct a malocclusion. Lining up your pearly whites in more perfect rows can mean fewer dental problems overall. Behind that beautiful new smile will be teeth that fit together properly for ease of eating and speaking, adding function and fit to the advantages of a new smile.

Dental facts that affect you

Good dental health doesn’t just happen. Healthy teeth and gums are the result of having the right information about the importance of good home care and regular dental examinations and cleanings, and then using that information to take steps toward the best oral health possible. Here are some dental facts of which we would like all our patients to be aware:

1. Oral cancer screenings are part of a routine checkup. Each time you visit us for a dental examination and cleaning, we will also be on the lookout for any early signs of oral cancer. Oral cancer is a deadly disease that can often be treated effectively if caught in its earliest stages.

2. Gum disease is not all in your mouth. The effects of gum disease are not limited to the teeth and gums. Periodontal disease has been linked to heart disease and stroke, among other health issues. Preventing gum disease can mean an overall healthier you.

3. Good nutrition is as important to healthy teeth as proper home care. Sugar is a favorite food of decay-causing bacteria. Each time you eat a sugar-laden food, you give bacteria an opportunity to actively attack your teeth. Avoiding foods that are high in sugar is essential to cavity prevention.

4. Dental difficulties don’t just go away. Too many patients decide to tough it out in hopes that the pain or problem will just subside rather than visiting us for dental treatment. Unfortunately, dental problems usually tend to get worse, and they require treatment to get better. We can recommend treatment options to reduce discomfort now and in the future and save your teeth.



Brush right!

Most people know that they should brush their teeth often to remove plaque and food debris, but not as many know how to brush properly. Here are a few tips to help you do just that:

1. Brush after each meal when possible. If you can’t do that, at least try to brush each morning and night, and rinse your mouth vigorously with water after meals and snacks.
2. Use a dollop of toothpaste about the size of a pea.
3. Hold the brush at a 45° angle, with the bristles near the gum line, and brush each tooth using a circular motion. Total brushing time should be about four to five minutes.
4. Be sure to brush all chewing surfaces, allowing the bristles to penetrate between teeth.
5. Don’t forget to brush your tongue from back to front to remove bacteria that can cause bad breath. Brush the insides of your cheeks to keep that area clean, too.

When you finish brushing, rinse well with water to remove any paste and debris left in your mouth.

