

TOOTH TALK

Produced for the Patients of Drs. James Thomas & Paul Chappel

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FROM THE DENTISTS

Do-It-Yourself Tooth Whitening

Believe it or not, people have been whitening their teeth for more than one hundred years. If it's done right, whitening can be a safe, inexpensive and dramatic way to whiten your smile. If you're thinking of whitening your teeth at home using a kit ordered from a TV infomercial, or purchased from the drug store, make sure that you understand the risks!

No one can guarantee the results of whitening. But one thing is certain – we're up-to-date on all the latest techniques. We have better ways to control the potentially harmful effects, and can do the job faster and more effectively. Office whitening or the home whitening that we prescribe usually lasts longer.

The tooth whitening products advertised on TV work in much the same way. They use hydrogen peroxide to bleach out stains on your tooth enamel, but that's where the similarities end. The amount of hydrogen peroxide varies with every brand so that the results you get will depend on how bad your staining is, where it is, the time required, and the peroxide concentration in your brand. In other words, the results are not nearly as predictable as products from our office.

If you are considering tooth whitening, give us a call. We can make a recommendation on the best product to brighten your smile!

Good News For Bad Breath

Bad breath is definitely a turnoff, but the good news is that in most cases it's easy to get rid of! Here are the most common causes and cures:

Plaque and food particles on the teeth are the number one source of bad breath. The solution is simple – keep your teeth clean.

Bad breath can be a warning sign of gum disease, or *gingivitis*. This disease leaves the tissues around the necks of the teeth red and swollen. If not cared for, this can lead to *periodontitis*, which attacks the gum tissue and jawbone, resulting in wobbly teeth. Dental treatment and a scrupulous home hygiene program can perk up your breath and save your teeth!

There's the dreaded *morning breath* that leaves a bad taste in your mouth. It's usually caused by leftover food or cigarette smoke lingering in your mouth overnight. Brushing your teeth and rinsing with mouthwash should do the trick.

Your tongue can also be the cause of bad breath. It gets coated with whitish bacteria that can taint your breath. When you brush, don't forget



your tongue! A gentle brushing will keep it fresh and pink.

If you wear dentures, thorough brushing and cleaning is a must. Dentures made of vulcanite are especially attractive to food particles and plaque. Dentures should be carefully cleaned and soaked overnight in a cleansing solution to keep bad odors at bay.

Bad breath can also be caused by some prescription drugs, fad diets and systemic diseases. If you can't chase your bad breath away with a brush, make an appointment. You don't have to live with bad breath.

The Numbers

32 The number of teeth the average adult has (including wisdom teeth).

1938 The year the first nylon toothbrush was introduced.

8 The century (BC) from which the earliest false teeth were discovered.

60 The number of different herbs commonly cited for treatment of dental problems in ancient Chinese medical books.

3 The age most parents bring their child to the dentist.

20 The percentage of patients wearing braces between the ages of twenty and sixty.

20 The date in September that China celebrates *Love Your Teeth Day* – a national holiday promoting oral-health awareness among its 1.2 billion people.

Don't neglect dental disease. It doesn't go away.

A Fitting Crown

This age has become one of personal fitness, good nutrition, and perfect appearance whether we like it or not. The business world expects our bodies to be trim and our smiles fresh, young, and confident.

All this puts pressure on ageing boomers to take a serious look at the state of their oral health in general, and the appearance of their teeth in particular. New technologies are providing us with exciting new methods to improve your smile, from replacing restorations with natural-looking materials, to office-supervised whitening of stained or discolored teeth, and even the replacement of veneers and crowns when necessary.

Crowns and veneers are tough, durable esthetic solutions to broken-down, decayed, or missing teeth. But just like your natural teeth, they can be damaged by many factors. As we age, our gums tend to recede which can expose a dark edge of metal or other material that may be decades old at the crown's gum line. We can replace old crowns with new porcelain composites that we are able to match to the shade of your other teeth. We can even duplicate the

contours and individual characteristics of natural teeth.

To explore how crowns and veneers can help you, please visit us for a consultation. We don't pretend to be a Fountain of Youth, but we sure do know how to revitalize your smile!



Cosmetic procedures can duplicate the natural contours of



Calcium Helps Protect Against Periodontal Disease

Recent research has confirmed the importance of calcium for your teeth and bones. According to a study published in the Journal of Periodontology, calcium deficiencies are directly linked to periodontal disease, which is a leading cause of tooth loss.

Researchers discovered that people who consume less than the recommended daily amount of calcium are almost twice as likely to have periodontal disease, an infection caused by bacteria that accumulate between the teeth and gums. About three out of four people don't meet their daily calcium needs.

Dairy products such as milk, cheese, yogurt and ice cream are the best sources of calcium. Other good sources include leafy green vegetables, canned sardines, salmon with edible bones, cereal, and tofu.

Make sure you talk to your health care provider to assess your ideal calcium requirement!

TOOTHY WISDOM

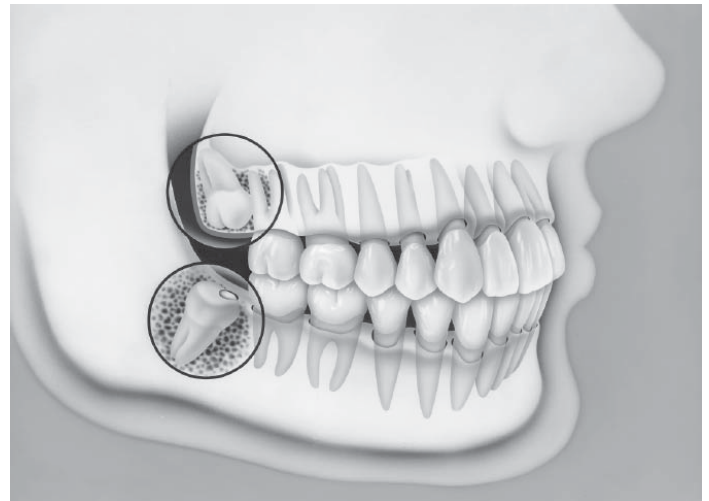
Nearly all of us develop *wisdom teeth*, and almost all of us wish we didn't. We have them on each side of our mouth, upper and lower. Strictly speaking, they are our third set of molars. And in fact, they are visitors from a *previous life* that have long outlived their welcome and their usefulness.

There was a time when our eating habits demanded more teeth, presumably to tear and chew raw meat off the bones of animals. Our forebears' jaws were large enough to accommodate 32 teeth, including the big chompers that we call wisdom teeth. But today, most of our jaws are only large enough to house 28 teeth. Something has to give!

Wisdom teeth begin to form at around age nine, and are usually completely mature by 18-21 years. By your late teens, your jawbone has nearly reached its adult size, but usually it isn't big enough to hold the wisdom teeth. As a result, these teeth can become trapped in the bone. When this happens, they

grow wherever they can. The tooth's crown may only partially break through the gum, or it may remain completely in the bone with the roots becoming misshapen or misplaced, growing dangerously close to a sinus cavity.

It's difficult for us to predict when or if your wisdom teeth will give you problems, but regular x-rays can give us a good indication. Impacted or infected wisdom teeth can cause severe damage. Removal at a younger age before complications develop means easier extractions and a much faster recovery time. Talk to us. We will develop a plan to help you make smart choices about your wisdom teeth.



Wisdom teeth can often become impacted in the jaw, or grow into adjacent teeth.

stages of dental development

Just The Two Of You

It might be hard to imagine, but a fetus begins to form tiny teeth buds as early as six weeks into a pregnancy.

A mother's oral health is essential to the health of the fetus. Pregnant women are particularly susceptible to *gingivitis*, or gum disease, which may travel through the blood stream to the uterus, and to the baby, sometimes causing premature labor and lower birth weight. If you're expecting, make sure you see us regularly during your pregnancy, and pay particular attention to your oral health home care.



From Birth To Two Years

You should begin your new baby's mouth care a few days after birth. Plaque and bacteria will begin to collect on baby's gums after every feeding. Clean the gums by gently massaging them with your (clean) finger, and later a damp cloth. And never ever let your baby lie in bed with a bottle of milk or juice as a

comfort. This can lead quickly to a condition known as *baby bottle tooth decay*, which is very serious. Also watch your child's intake of sweets. The time for your baby's first dental visit is between the ages of two and three.



Three To Six: Toddler To Schoolchild

Brushing and flossing! During these years, children learn the basics of daily, regular oral health care. Brush at least twice daily, and always at bedtime. Start to teach your child to choose healthy alternatives to soft drinks and sweets. Schedule regular checkups with us for preventive care. Teach your child that dental visits are not scary!



Seven To Twelve: The Tooth Fairy!

This is about the time when your child's baby teeth are replaced by the permanent for-a-lifetime set. These years are also critical ones for reinforcing regular oral health care habits. Be firm! Set a specific time for brushing, after breakfast and before bedtime, and no skipping allowed. If your child participates in body-contact sports, make sure you introduce him or her to mouthguards to protect those precious teeth. Gum disease is also possible at this age, so make sure that flossing accompanies brushing at least once a day.



Thirteen To Eighteen: The Hormones Cometh

Teenagers are even more susceptible to tooth decay than adults, usually because of their diet and inadequate oral care. As if

adolescence wasn't tough enough with appearance and self-image being so important! Teen teeth need tough love. Teens enjoy soft drinks and snacks, wisdom teeth arrive, and often braces are needed (along with extra care). Every opportunity should be taken to emphasize the lifelong importance of professional and personal care. And make sure your teen knows that bad breath can be cured by doing all the boring home care their parents keep harping about!

Can a killer toothache be the precursor to further disaster?

Most animals in the wild want nothing to do with humans. The ferocious jaws of lions and tigers and bears have claimed few people, even though, as zoologist Bruce Patterson points out, "Humans are easy prey. We're slow, we don't hear very well, and we don't see in the dark."

But a lion with a toothache? Take cover ... *fast!* Patterson studied the remains of two lions that in 1898 in Kenya killed and ate 135 railway workers. Their jaws showed they suffered from broken teeth that could

have made it difficult for the lions to kill large animals. These findings might explain why wild lions sometimes hunt humans. But researchers are cautious in saying dental problems definitely contribute to attacks on humans.

But just in case, make sure the *lions* in your family come in to see us soon. We wouldn't want their purr to turn into a growl!



Good For Your Waistline

But not your teeth!

You may think if you're drinking diet soda that your teeth are safe from the dangers of sugar. We all know that sugar contributes to the development of tooth decay. What you may not realize is diet pop can do almost as much damage to your teeth. Diet sodas don't have any sugar, but they do contain larger amounts of phosphoric and citric acid to enhance flavor.

These acids attack the enamel that protects your teeth, which means you're much more likely to get cavities and to develop irritations, cracks and



sensitivity to cold. People with orthodontic appliances (braces) may be even more prone to decay, especially if they do not practice excellent oral hygiene.

Any highly acidic drink, such as pineapple or orange juice, other fruit juices, and sodas, can spell trouble! A tall glass of water following the consumption of highly acidic drinks will help, but the best way to reduce your risk is to brush your teeth. Better yet, why not choose the very best thirst quencher? Water has no fat, no caffeine, and no acid!

Please Help Us To Serve You Better

Cancelled appointments cost all of us. When our time is not used effectively we lose our freedom to see you when you really need us. If you must reschedule an appointment, we ask that you contact our office at least **48 HOURS** beforehand. Please give us a call at 872-3870 and we will be happy to find a more suitable time for you. And when you book that appointment, please make sure that we have all the telephone numbers we may need to reach you. A little bit of forethought can save all of us a lot of precious time!

OFFICE INFORMATION

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Office Hours

Monday 8:00 am – 5:00 pm
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..... Clinical Assistants
Carol, Kim, Tanya
..... Dental Hygienists

Brush • Floss • Smile



Oral Piercing

How it can affect your dental health

These days it's not unusual for fashionable attire among young people to include tongue piercing. If you're thinking of getting in on the trend, there are some health issues you should consider first. Any time jewelry is inserted through the soft tissues of the mouth, there's a risk of infection and allergic reaction. The barbell end of the jewelry can chip your teeth and make it harder to eat or speak clearly. You can expect pain and swelling for several days after a piercing. Piercing can also change the way you taste food by interfering with your taste buds.

If you do decide to have your tongue pierced, make sure it's done at a sterile, safe and reputable establishment. People with oral piercing must take special care to regularly brush their tongue, irrigate the hole with water and keep jewelry meticulously clean. But be careful... many jewelry cleaners are toxic and must not be swallowed. Make sure you rinse well before you put jewelry back in your mouth.

Carrots Lower The Risk Of Oral Cancer

Dental experts are now finding that eating more nutritious food is probably just as important as staying away from sticky, sugary, cavity-causing foods. Carrots are just one example of foods that will give your oral health a boost. A fresh crisp and chewy carrot stick can act almost like a toothbrush by scraping away some of the bacteria and plaque on your teeth.

And that's not all. Carrots may actually lower your chance of oral cancer because they are full of beta-carotene. Research shows that people who eat lots of beta-carotene don't get oral cancer as often. There is evidence that the beta-carotene in carrots may even help people who already have some forms of oral cancer. In one study on people with leukoplakia, the white lesions in the mouth that can mark the early stages of oral cancer, just thirty milligrams of beta-carotene a day produced improvement in up to 70% of cases.

