

Dr. Thomas'

TOOTH TALK

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

Fall 2002

FROM THE DENTISTS

Autumn Again

The seasons have rolled around and fall is here again. Autumn is often a time for reflection in advance of the holiday season: a time to put the past year into perspective.

There are some practical concerns, of course. Your whole family will need their after-summer dental checkup. Holidays are a wonderful time, but all too often regular habits like brushing and flossing get neglected, and not just by the kids! Also, we usually consume more sugary snacks and beverages in the summer which puts stress on your oral health.

Are your children playing any contact sports this fall? Will they need to be fitted for proper mouthguards? Football, soccer, hockey, basketball, even track and field are activities where your children need mouthguard protection. We can custom fit and supply the safest mouthguards available right here in our office. Remember ... there is no substitute for individually fitted mouthguard protection.

So when the autumn leaves swirl, and a new season takes hold, think about how much there is to look forward to ... including your healthy smile! With proper home care, regular visits to our office, and precautions to protect your smile, you'll be flashing those pearly whites *every* season!

– Dr. James Thomas
& Dr. Paul Chappel

Save That Tooth

Endodontic therapy

In the early days of dentistry, diseased teeth often had to be pulled out to stop infection. It's hard to replace the form and function of a natural tooth, so modern dentistry has developed techniques to remove infection while saving precious natural tooth.

Two important components of your teeth are the roots and the crown. The white part of the tooth that you see above the gum is the crown. Inside each crown there are tiny channels that run the length of the tooth into a root that anchors it in your jawbone. This channel is called the root canal and it contains *pulp* – the nerves and blood vessels that bring the tooth the vital nutrition it needs to grow and stay healthy.

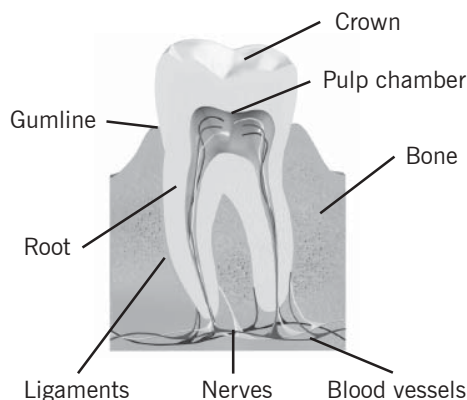
There are many dental problems that can cause disease in the pulp. Sometimes an injury such as a car accident, a hard blow, or a crack in the tooth can damage the living tissue inside but the most common cause is tooth decay. Harmful bacteria break



through the outer shell of your tooth and open a cavity. If not stopped, the decay will continue toward the nerve of the tooth causing an infection or abscess. Besides pain, this can spell big trouble for your jawbone and your tooth.

We will test the tooth in various ways to see how bad the damage is and, if necessary, we'll gain access through the crown to take out the diseased pulp. Once the damaged pulp is removed, the root canal is flushed out and treated with medication. The root will then be permanently filled with special material so that the tooth can be restored. The procedure can take a few visits while the infection clears up but the good news is that this kind of therapy has more than a 90% tooth-saving success rate and costs a lot less than extraction and replacement. That's a lot of happy smiles!

Tooth anatomy



Thank you for all your referrals – we appreciate them!

You Are What You Eat

From Your Gums To Your Feet

According to a recent poll, 75% of periodontists recommend their patients consume more vitamin C for the health of their gum tissues and more calcium for bone health.

Research has proven that people who consume insufficient amounts have higher rates of periodontal disease. Many periodontists recommend supplements to boost intake. Happily, their advice seems to be working. In a separate poll of consumers, nearly 57% said they've improved their diet to improve periodontal health. Some foods have an adverse effect on your gums. The top culprit? Popcorn! Husks can get caught between teeth and gums, causing infection. But don't shun popcorn ... just rinse, brush, and floss after the movie!



ATTENTION SHOPPERS:

Buckle Up!

Protecting our children from harm is as strong an instinct as humans possess. We do all we can to shield them from injury and disease, and we work hard to give them the best possible food, shelter, and education ... not to mention showering them with a zillion loving hugs. But sometimes threats to our children's well-being seem to spring out of nowhere.

Take the not-so-innocent shopping cart. According to the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, falls from shopping carts are the leading cause of head injuries among young children. In 1995, close to 30,000 children across North America were taken to the emergency room after falling from the seat or basket of a shopping cart. And fully half of the injuries were classified as severe, including concussions, broken bones, and broken or chipped teeth.

Parents can ensure their children's safety by buckling them into the seats of carts while shopping. If your store doesn't have straps, ask the manager to provide them. And don't be shy ... in some jurisdictions manufacturers are required to equip all new carts with safety straps.

DENTISTRY

2900 BC An Egyptian skull shows two holes drilled through the jawbone, presumably to drain an abscessed tooth. *Ouch!* The Egyptians also had the first officially designated tooth specialists.



500 BC Both Hippocrates and Aristotle write of sterilization procedures using a red-hot wire to treat teeth and oral tissue disease. They also mention tooth extraction and the use of wires to support loose teeth and to stabilize jaw fractures.



1460 AD An Italian doctor, Giovanni Archoli, writes ten rules for dental hygiene, including cleansing the teeth after meals. He's one of the first to establish a connection between food and dental decay.



1700 AD Pierre Fauchard, a French surgeon known as "the father of modern dentistry" writes *The Surgeon Dentist, A Treatise On Teeth* which describes basic oral anatomy, including references to periodontal disease and even orthodontics.



INVISIBLE FILLINGS

The less you see, the more you get

Only a few short years ago there was practically no choice in materials used to restore your teeth: silver amalgam fillings were the order of the day. And most of us still sport one or two examples of these durable but unsightly restorations.

The invention of new tooth-colored filling materials has changed all that. The new materials called composite resins – plastic mixtures filled with glass or silica and resin ionomers with fluoride-releasing properties – are both tough and efficient. And best of all, we can carefully color the filling to match the appearance of your own teeth.

Composites bond to your tooth in such a way that the remaining tooth structure is supported and strengthened. This helps to prevent breakage and insulates teeth from excessive temperature changes. Cosmetic touch-ups of cracked or chipped teeth are also made easily and are invisible with these new materials. Resin ionomers are particularly

suitable for children because they release fluoride, and for older adults because their sealing and fluoride properties reduce root decay.

The chewing surfaces of your back teeth work really hard, and damage can occur. For these restorations, we'll often use what's called an inlay which fits in the grooves between the cusps of a tooth. We can use tooth-colored porcelain inlays, which are both cosmetically attractive and super tough. First we carefully remove the damaged portion of your tooth, then shape the remainder so it can hold the inlay. We take an impression of your tooth, and from this the inlay is manufactured. Your custom-made inlay is then cemented permanently to your tooth, rivaling the strength and beauty of its natural properties. We carefully polish it, and check the bite to ensure a perfect fit.

Please see us for a consultation so we can make sure your smile is healthy and at its sparkling best.



Bad Breath Test

No one wants to talk about bad breath. No one really wants to let you know you might have a certain, shall we say, problem. If you exercise good oral hygiene and you still suffer from bad breath, don't be embarrassed. Talk to us ... we can probably help. Here are three simple methods of testing your breath.

ONE Grasp your tongue and pull it forward. Have a clean washcloth in your other hand. Rub or scrape the furthest back portion of your tongue three times with the washcloth. Wait 45 seconds and then smell the portion of the cloth that was rubbed on your tongue. Does it have a bad odor?

TWO Take a piece of unwaxed, unflavored white dental floss and floss between your back molars, both upper and lower. Examine the floss. Is it discolored? Wait 45 seconds and then smell it closely. Does it have a bad smell?

THREE Here's a quick test that's not quite as effective, but may give you some indication. Simply lick your own clean wrist, then wait and smell.



Photos courtesy of Ivoclar North America Inc.

We can carefully color the filling to match the appearance of your own teeth.

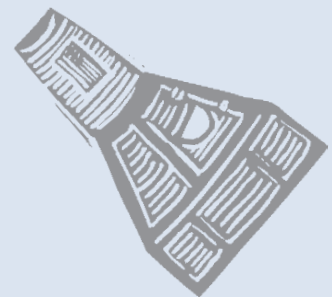
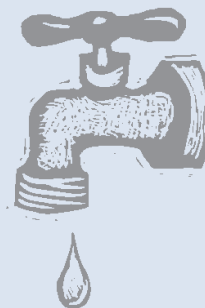
THROUGH THE AGES

1840 AD Americans Horace Hayden and Chapin Harris, the inventors of modern dentistry, establish the world's first dental school in Baltimore.



1900 AD American G.V. Black standardizes both cavity preparation and the manufacturing process of silver fillings. He also invents the foot engine that allows dentists to keep "hands free" while powering the dental drill.

1945 AD Grand Rapids, Michigan becomes the first city in the world to fluoridate its drinking water.



1960 AD Electric toothbrushes are introduced in the United States.



Nine Things We Can See That You Can't!

When we check your teeth at the office, we see things you won't see in the mirror. Just by saying *open wide* we can detect a number of problems that aren't visible to the untrained eye.

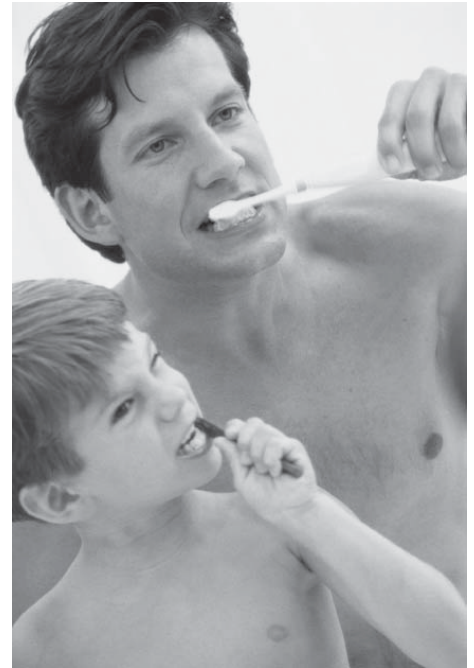
If you are ever tempted to skip an appointment because you don't feel any pain and can't see anything wrong, think again

Your teeth can alert us of possible deterioration in fillings, crowns and other restorations. We may spot the beginnings of root cavities or decay on the roots of your teeth which have been laid bare by receding gums. A close inspection can reveal troublesome periodontal pockets

caused by gum disease, and sometimes it takes a radiograph and a little dental detective work, but we may even find indications of new decay tucked under the gumline or hidden under existing fillings - two places you just can't see!

You may not know it, but your teeth may have hairline fractures. You may not feel it yet, but a wisdom tooth may be impacted. Your gums can tell us about impending gum disease and your mouth may even show the early warning signs of oral cancer.

All of these dental problems can be treated and often reversed if they are spotted in the early stages. If you are ever tempted to skip an appointment because you don't feel any pain and can't see anything wrong, think again. It's what you can't see that can cause the most trouble!



OFFICE INFORMATION

James D. Thomas, DDS
R. Paul Chappel, DDS
6240 Hill Street
Cass City, MI 48726

Office Hours

Monday 8:00 am - 5:00 pm
Tuesday 8:00 am - 5:00 pm
Wednesday 8:00 am - 5:00 pm
Thursday 8:00 am - 5:00 pm
Friday 7:00 am - 4:00 pm

Other hours available on request

Contact Information

Office (989) 872-3870
Fax (989) 872-4582
Emergency (989) 872-5518
Email drthomas@hilltopdentistry.com
Web site www.hilltopdentistry.com

Office Staff

Denise, Sheri, Kris Receptionists
Chris, Susie, Heather, Amanda, Jamie
..... Clinical Assistants
Carol, Kim, Tanya ... Dental Hygienists

Brush • Floss • Smile

DISCOVER



BreathRx™

Bad breath is a serious concern for many of our patients. Even the best regime of home oral health care sometimes doesn't seem to get the job done. We'd like to acquaint you with a new system for controlling bad breath called *BreathRx™*.

BreathRx™ is a first-rate solution to bad breath

BreathRx produces special brushes, tongue scrapers, toothpaste, antibacterial tongue gel, spray, and even mouth rinses that are specially formulated to combat bad breath. Each of the unique BreathRx products contains *Zytex™*, an exclusive ingredient containing zinc, eucalyptus oil, and thymol which neutralizes volatile sulfur compounds. The active ingredient, cetylpyridinium chloride, kills bacteria on contact, stopping bad breath at its source. BreathRx mouth rinse is the only antibacterial mouth rinse that's 100% alcohol-free!

We have great confidence in this product line, and know it will be a first-rate solution to bad breath problems. Schedule a consultation. We'd be pleased to determine if the BreathRx system can help you!

High Sticking!

Sport injury studies have shown that the mouth is the most often injured part of the body, and all teeth injuries are permanent. Even though we can help restore their appearance, your teeth cannot heal themselves like other parts of your body. That's why mouth protection is an important investment that will help you come out a winner every time. There are two types of protection available - internal and external. External protectors are usually fixed, rigid helmets that cover the entire face. Internal protectors are worn over the upper teeth. They help guard against frontal and upper cut blows. Custom-fitted mouthpieces are best, especially when combined with an approved helmet. But it's important you get a new mouthpiece fitted every year to accommodate tooth growth and development.

