

Dr. Thomas'

TOOTH TALK

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

Spring 2001

FROM THE DENTISTS

Dental Phobias

Nothing to be afraid of

It's safe to say that few individuals love going to the dentist. But for many people ducking the dentist has almost become a reflex. Studies show that a significant percentage of the population puts off dental treatment because of fear and anxiety.

Skipping the dentist can set you up for a number of oral health problems. Without regular cleanings, your gums are more likely to break down and become diseased. Fillings can fall out and the results can leave you with unnecessary pain and discomfort. With modern anesthesia, dental procedures, even the once dreaded root canal, are discomfort-free. It's surprising that some people would still rather nurse an aching tooth than get it healed painlessly.

Fear should not prevent you from keeping your teeth and gums healthy. Topical freezing can help to dull the prick of the anaesthetic needle, while sedative gas and oral medications let you feel warm and comfortable during the entire procedure.

Sometimes knowing it won't hurt doesn't stop the fear. The most important thing you can do to conquer your fear is to talk about it with your dentist. There are a number of relaxation techniques and distraction aids such as video and music that can help you to sit back and enjoy the ride. If you're a dentist-ducker, come on in and talk to us about it - we can help.

Drill-less Dentistry

A gentler way to treat tooth decay

There's a new alternative to the dental drill. It's called KCP® - kinetic cavity preparation - and it will make cavity care a lot more comfortable for many of our patients.

This new instrument works like a microscopically precise miniature sandblaster. It sprays a stream of tiny particles too small to be seen with the naked eye gently and precisely onto the tooth to wear away decay. The action is so gentle, the KCP allows us to treat decay at an earlier stage without removing as much healthy tooth material. That means fewer crowns and smaller fillings that last longer.

What patients like most about the KCP is how good it feels. There's none of the heat and vibration associated with traditional drilling. The most noticeable sound you'll hear is the suction system picking up the loose particles from your mouth. And there's none of the telltale whirring sound that puts many



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patients on edge - only a faint blowing like an aerosol being sprayed. It's so gentle the KCP can often be used without anaesthetic - no needle and no drill.

Of course it can't do everything a drill can do - we still use traditional methods for treatments like preparing teeth for crowns and taking out silver-colored fillings. But the KCP is ideal for removing cavities and getting teeth ready for *white* fillings. It also works wonders with many cosmetic procedures such as inlays, onlays and veneers. The KCP makes short work of applying protective sealants to kids' teeth by cutting treatment time from minutes to seconds. Whatever job it's given, the patient-friendly KCP is sure to put a smile on your face.

New technology can help us provide a pain-free and anxiety-free visit

Fight That Cold

A new study has shown that bacteria on a toothbrush can aggravate your illness. We recommend our patients change their toothbrushes every three months, or with the seasons. But it may be a good idea to do that sooner if you've recently had an infection such as sinusitis, pneumonia, or upset stomach. The study demonstrated that bacteria from your illness can stay on the toothbrush and remain there for up to a month. That could extend your recovery time.

When purchasing your replacement, make sure to buy a soft-bristled toothbrush with round-ended bristles.

We already know that regularly replacing your toothbrush is good for the health of your teeth and gums, so fighting infection is just one more reason to invest in a new toothbrush!



The Science Of Smiles

Facial proportions can add up to good health

Many people recognize Leonardo Da Vinci's famous drawing of a human figure in a circle. What they might not know is that his drawing illustrates divine proportion! Theoretically, all living organisms and biologic entities, including man, are genetically encoded to develop into an ideal proportion based on a mysterious but biologically significant numerical value of 1.618.

Da Vinci's drawing, for example, shows that if the distance from a person's head to belly button equals 1, then the distance from the belly button to the toes equals 1×1.618 (just one of the thousands of examples of divine proportion in the human body). And this applies to a person's face as well. To be in ideal proportion, the width of the face from cheek to cheek must be 10 inches, and the length of the face from the top of the head to the bottom of the chin should be 16.18. The fact is that the vast majority of faces and bodies are out of

proportion by varying degrees and are either long (greater than 1×1.618) or short (less than 1×1.618). The good news is most people actually prefer some facial asymmetry to perfect symmetry, but it's what that means to your health and smile that's important.

It has been suggested that the further away a person's face is from the ideal facial proportion, the more likely that person will be to experience health concerns. A person with a short face or weak chin is more likely to have headaches due to the added pressure on the jaw joint area. A person with a long, narrow face is more likely to have problems breathing through their nose. Dentists with training in orthodontic and temporomandibular disorder (TMD) therapy can alleviate facial disharmony without surgery through the use of orthodontic appliances. In doing so you can improve both your appearance and your health.

We've Got You Covered: Facts On Dental Sealants

What are dental sealants?

A dental sealant is a plastic material used to protect the chewing surfaces of the teeth. Dental sealants are applied to decay-prone surfaces of the teeth, usually the back molars and pre-molars. Sealants come in the form of a liquid which quickly hardens to form a shield over these chewing surfaces.

Why get sealants?

Sealants keep out the germs and food that cause tooth decay. The chewing surfaces of the back teeth are rough and uneven and generally have small pits and grooves. Food and germs can get stuck in these uneven

areas and stay there a long time because toothbrush bristles cannot brush them away. Germs in the mouth change the sugar in food to acid which can start a cavity in the tooth. Sealants prevent decay from ever starting.

Who should get sealants?

Children should get sealants on their permanent molars as soon as the teeth come in, before decay has a chance to attack the teeth.

Sealants also have an important role to play in adult dental care since adults can still get decay. Patients afflicted with dry mouth, which affects about one-third of the adult population, can benefit greatly. Sealants also protect worn and sensitive surfaces on adult teeth.

How are sealants put on?

First, the tooth is cleaned and dried thoroughly and prepared so the surface is a little rough and therefore easier for the sealant to bond to. The tooth is rinsed and dried once more and the sealant is then applied in liquid form and hardens in just a few seconds.

Besides sealants, are there other ways to prevent tooth decay?

Yes! The best way you can help prevent tooth decay is to brush with fluoride toothpaste, drink fluoridated water, and floss regularly. Sealants and fluoride used together provide the best defence against tooth decay.



who says kids have all the fun?

More adults are wearing braces than ever before



Are crooked or crowded teeth something you wish had been corrected when you were younger? Wish no longer. These days, orthodontics isn't just for kids. More and more adults are recognizing that braces can mean healthier mouths, greater self-esteem, and long-term gain. In fact, today adults make up 25% of orthodontic patients!

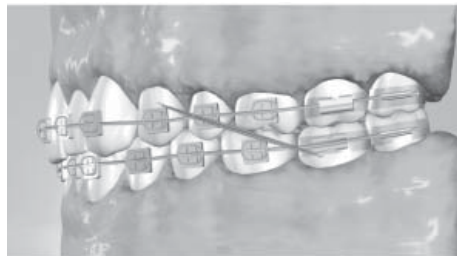
Crooked, crowded, or misaligned teeth can make chewing difficult, and even painful if your jaw joint is stressed incorrectly. An awkward smile may chip away at your self-confidence. Straight teeth and aligned jaws are easier to brush and floss, lowering the incidence of cavities, gum disease, and tooth loss.

Orthodontics work by placing gentle pressure on the teeth to move them into proper alignment. The type

and length of treatment varies according to your condition. *Tooth uprighting* is for tilted teeth. Mild crowding of the teeth can sometimes be treated with selective filing and wearing a removable appliance. Excessive crowding may require some teeth to be removed so that the other teeth can be guided into their proper position.

Braces have come a long way from the clunky *train tracks* you may remember. They are more comfortable and less visible – even *invisible* for some treatments. Brackets that are bonded to your teeth can now be made of clear plastic or porcelain. Some treatments can even allow braces to be attached to the back of your teeth.

Your treatment plan may last between six months to three years, depending on the level of adjustment your teeth need. Because your mouth is one of the first things people notice about you, a strong, beautiful smile can take years off your appearance, and dramatically increase your self-esteem. Orthodontic treatment is a short-term investment that allows you to feel better about yourself, and keep your teeth strong and healthy.



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Tips For Sound Dental Nutrition

Traditional wisdom holds that sweets and snacks are the biggest culprits when it comes to cavities. But certain carbohydrates found in breads, cakes, pizzas, and even rice can be just as damaging as a candy bar.

How we eat and drink has a major effect on dental health. Research shows that the cavity-causing power of a food depends on many factors: frequency of consumption; texture (stickiness); and how long the food remains in your mouth before being rinsed or brushed out. A balanced, nutritious diet is also important because your body's total health is directly related to your dental health. The order in which foods are eaten during a meal is also important. Some foods with a high fibre content, like apples or carrots, can be helpful at the end of a meal. These foods increase salivary flow thereby decreasing the time harmful sugars and starches remain in your mouth.

A soft drink sipped slowly throughout an afternoon is far more damaging than one consumed quickly. Drinking a soft drink with a meal lessens risk further because other food properties such as fibre, fat, and minerals interfere with the drink's potential to do damage. The number of meals or snacks consumed during a day is also an important factor. Our body's natural decay-fighting mechanisms need some "down time" between food and drink consumption to do their job – not enough recovery time weakens their effectiveness.

When thinking about snacks, consider:

- the number of times a day you eat sugary snacks;
- how long the sugary food stays in your mouth;
- the texture of the sugary food. Is it chewy? Sticky?

Low-fat choices like raw vegetables, fresh fruits, or whole-grain crackers, popcorn, or bread are smart snack choices. And make sure you brush your teeth well with a fluoride toothpaste after snacks, or at the very least, rinse your mouth out with warm water or a mouthrinse.

Overcoming Dental Anxiety

Here are some simple exercises to help you relax

The American Dental Association estimates that millions of Americans suffer from dental anxiety. These are patients who continually cancel appointments, don't come in for checkups and delay necessary treatment until they have a much more serious problem. The one million people who never see a dentist, the true dental phobics, are very apt to end up toothless!

With modern equipment and techniques, dentistry is now virtually painless. If you are fearful, the first step is to tell us - our goal is to provide you with the best dental care possible and we can't do that if you're not here!

These are a few tips to help make your visit to our office worry-free:

- Ask questions about procedures that cause you anxiety. If you know and understand what is going to happen, you'll have less reason to worry.

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- Eat a light meal before your visit and try not to drink coffee, teas or colas as they stimulate you instead of relaxing you. Eating a rich protein snack like a lean meat sandwich will help stabilize your blood sugar and reduce irritability.

- Distract yourself in the dental chair by using headphones to listen to

the radio or to music you find relaxing. This will muffle noises that may bother you.

- Establish a signal, such as raising your hand, to let us know you want us to stop a procedure. It will make you feel more in control and it gives you a chance to ask for more anaesthetic if you feel any discomfort.

- The ways you deal with stress outside of the dental office will work inside too! Try thinking of pleasant images, deep breathing or relaxing your muscles one by one.

Some or all of these techniques may help you feel more at ease but above all, don't be afraid to ask us for a helping hand. That's what we're here for!

OFFICE INFORMATION

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Children's Cough Medicine And Lozenges

Read the label

Cough drops and lozenges are more than just medicine. Cough syrups, liquid and tablet vitamins, and antibiotic syrups can contain anywhere from 10-75%

sugar, especially children's formulas. Throat lozenges and cough drops range from fifty to nearly 75% sugar. That's not a big deal if you only use them once in a while. But that

much sugar can cause serious decay if you take these medicines on a regular basis. That's why children who use syrups and lozenges over long periods of time have a much higher incidence of decay.

The good news is that more and more medicines are being made without sugar. Check the label and make sure you're not getting more than you bargained for. If you're not sure, ask your pharmacist for help.



Allergies And Plaque Buildup

Signs of spring can bring more than flowers in bloom for people with allergies. Sneezing attacks and running noses can make life pretty miserable, even when the sun is shining. That's why a lot of allergy sufferers turn to antihistamines for relief. What many people don't

know is that many allergy medications can cause problems in your mouth. Antihistamines may do a good job of drying out runny noses, but they also dry out your mouth.

That means less saliva to wash away debris from your teeth. Over time the plaque will build up around teeth and gums and cause cavities. If you are taking antihistamines, the best remedy is to drink plenty of water and keep your mouth moist. Brushing and flossing after each meal will keep your smile healthy and stop plaque from getting a hold of your teeth.

