

# TOOTH TALK

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

Spring 2003

## FROM THE **DENTISTS**

### Spring Is Here!

Open up the windows and breathe! The sweet smells of spring are all around us and it is wonderful. It's time to throw off the weight of winter and put some new life into your step. When brightening things up why not include your smile?

Spring is the perfect time to come in for a cleaning and get your mouth feeling its best. A cleaning will help spot potential problems and eliminate the causes leading up to them. We know you do your best at cleaning your own teeth, but sometimes food debris, plaque, and calculus can build up without you realizing it. Our trained, helpful staff would be happy to give you a refresher on how best to care for your teeth at home, as regular maintenance is the best way to avoid repairs.

You may also be considering some of the new cosmetic techniques. With the latest advancements we are able to whiten, mask stains, fill gaps, and cover cracks quickly and painlessly. If this is something you have been thinking about, but just weren't sure what was involved, ask for a free consultation. Looking your best helps you to feel your best, and we're always happy to help. What better way to say *welcome spring* than with a dazzling smile?

- Dr. James Thomas  
& Dr. Paul Chappel

## 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.

*A balanced, nutritious diet is important because your body's total health is directly related to your dental health*

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 fiber content, like carrots, can be helpful at the end of a meal, increasing salivary flow which

decreases the time harmful sugars and starches remain in your mouth.

A soft drink sipped throughout an afternoon is far more damaging than one consumed quickly. Drinking it with a meal lessens risk further because other foods 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 eating and drinking to do their job - not enough recovery time weakens their effectiveness.

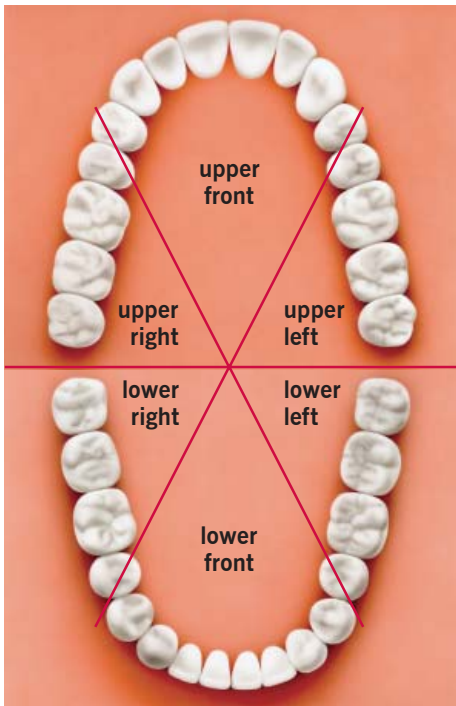
Low fat choices like raw vegetables, fresh fruits, or popcorn are smart snack choices. Make sure you brush well with a fluoride toothpaste after snacks!

### When Thinking About Snacks, Consider...

- 1 The number of times a day you eat sugary snacks.
- 2 How long the sugary food stays in your mouth.
- 3 The texture of the sugary food. Is it chewy? Sticky?



# Micro-Mapping Your Future



**Probe: (prôb) noun:** An exploratory action, expedition, or device.

Believe it or not, to a dental professional, probing the micro world of the oral cavity is every bit as absorbing and as important as an explorer's expedition to Everest, or a Cousteau underwater adventure. The oral cavity *is* a fascinating and complex microcosm, but more importantly – timely exploration could save your smile and perhaps even your life. This is particularly true of the gingivae or gums that make up the tissues surrounding your teeth. Untreated bacterial buildup in the mouth can cause periodontal disease which has been linked to cardiovascular and other systemic illnesses, including diabetes and osteoporosis. Periodontal disease is the number-one cause of tooth loss in adults. Diagnosis and prevention are a top priority.

**Probe: (prôb) noun:** A slender, flexible surgical instrument.

The periodontal probe is a specially designed instrument used in a simple three-minute test. It measures, maps, and tracks the health of your gums. Your mouth will be divided into sections, and your "score" will indicate whether further testing is required. This test allows quick, simple, and effective monitoring of your oral health.



## Future Wave

**Dentistry continues to push the envelope of scientific knowledge.**

Scientists can clone, characterize, and identify patterns of a protein in mice that appear to be important to the body's ability to create dental materials. Previously it was thought that these proteins could only form

enamel, but experiments are being done to **regenerate periodontal (gum) tissues.**

Scientists have discovered that a deficiency in white blood cell function can contribute to early-onset or aggressive **periodontal disease.** Bacteria initiate the disease, but when white blood cells can't reach infection sites, a bacterial overgrowth may occur. This opens **an exciting new**

**avenue for future treatments.**

Developing effective antibiotics presents a greater challenge due to the copious types of bacteria in the mouth. Vaccine experiments have shown promise with animals, but it will be some time before these are available.

The best **cure for periodontal disease?** Prevention and early detection – no matter what the future holds.



In an earlier age you might have believed that opening your eyes in the morning caused the sun to come up. It's easy to draw conclusions about cause and effect based on observation ...and then run with them. But now we know better.

Over time, observers developed scientific methods and learned to

exercise caution before drawing conclusions. This is especially true when we try to establish cause and effect regarding disease. It takes a whole body of research over a very long time to weed out other contributing factors and to decide just what is affecting what. Applying this to dentistry, if patients with

**1960s**

A Boston study followed 1,231 healthy men. By the late 1990s, the men who started out with bad gums had about twice the death rate as the others, particularly from cardiovascular disease.

**1970s**

A Wisconsin study followed up on the health of 9,760 Americans surveyed in the 1970s. By 1987, heart disease was 25% more common in those who had gum disease in the first study.

# Your Smile Is More Than Your Teeth

When we look at beautiful smiles, it's easy to focus on the teeth, but if you look closely, you'll see that there's more to a youthful, dazzling smile. Pink, healthy gums surrounding sparkling teeth also send out a message of health and youth. If you really want a sunshine smile, take care of your periodontal health!

Your gums aren't perfect? You're not alone. Periodontal disease affects 75% of adults over 35 years of age, and up to 30% of the population may be genetically susceptible. Tobacco use, stress, medications, systemic disease, or fluctuating hormonal levels during puberty, pregnancy, or menopause can all affect the health of your gums.

The earliest stage, known as *gingivitis*, is characterized by red, swollen gums that bleed easily. Gingivitis begins when the bacteria in plaque – the sticky film that forms on teeth – causes inflammation. It's reversible with diligent home care and regular dental treatment.

Periodontal disease is progressive if untreated, and in later stages, only professional dental intervention can help. Advanced periodontal disease (*periodontitis*) can lead to severe inflammation, bone loss, gum recession, and tooth loss.

*Healthy gums and teeth* mean a healthy mouth – and that's the look you've been looking for!



## What We Can Do

### [Screening]

To assist with early detection of periodontal disease, periodontal screening is a part of your routine oral checkup.

### [Tartar/Calculus Removal]

To remove the hard calcium deposit formed over time when plaque collects and hardens.

### [Root Planing]

To remove plaque and tartar deposits that have built up above and below the gumline. The root surfaces are smoothed to help prevent future bacterial deposits.

## What You Can Do

### [Brush]

To remove food particles and plaque from your teeth, to stimulate your gums, and to clean your tongue.

### [Floss]

To remove food particles from between your teeth, plaque from above and below your gumline, and to prevent tartar buildup.

### [Mouth Rinse]

To effectively reduce the bacteria that form plaque and tartar, and to freshen your breath. Make sure it's been approved by the Dental Association.

cardiovascular disease have periodontal disease, which is the cause and which is the effect? Or is one a symptom of the other? Until these questions are answered, the scientific community prefers to talk about *links*.

There is no question about it. There is a body of circumstantial evidence building strong links between

periodontal disease and overall health, and there are two favored theories:

- Bacteria are released from the mouth into the bloodstream, perhaps while brushing, and release toxins. Periodontal plaque has been found on artery walls.
- Bacteria-fighting blood cells give off proteins that could have harmful

effects on the body, and may trigger premature labor by making the uterus contract.

All of the evidence has yet to come in ... but in the meantime, please take care of your periodontal health. Brush, floss, rinse, and attend your regularly scheduled appointments to ensure a lifetime of healthy smiles.

# 1993

The British Medical Journal published a study that showed 7,610 Americans with periodontal disease had a 25% higher risk of coronary heart disease than those without gum disease.

# 2000

The Surgeon General's Report On Oral Health In America recognizes that oral & general health are linked. The connection between oral health & many diseases is evident, but more study is required.

# 2002

Studies continue to research the links established between periodontal disease & low-weight pre-term births, osteoporosis, respiratory & heart disease, stroke, & diabetes.

# Changes To Better Serve You!

We are making many changes at our office to serve you better. These changes include remodeling in our reception area, the development of a consistent logo, welcoming new staff members who have joined our practice, and changes on our web site.

*We are making many changes at our office to serve you better*

We are beginning remodeling of the reception and business areas to more efficiently serve you and also to comply with new federal privacy laws. You can read more about the new HIPAA law and our privacy statement on our web site at [www.asmileforlife.com](http://www.asmileforlife.com).

We are in the process of developing a consistent logo which reflects our

values and desires for your oral health care. Our mission is to provide you excellent dental service over the course of your lifetime, giving you an enhanced smile. We have changed our web site name to reflect the theme that we want you to have a healthy, happy smile, for your entire life. Watch for more information about this in the coming weeks.

We have hired new staff members to assist in your ongoing dental care. We have hired another Hygienist - Jami. You may meet Jami during your regularly scheduled preventive care



Welcome Jami

appointment. We also have a new Office Manager - Timothy. He will help streamline the business operations and systems of our practice. As soon as you have the opportunity to interact with them, please join us in welcoming these new team members to our office staff!

We have made new changes to our web site. You can now access our web site using a new address: [www.asmileforlife.com](http://www.asmileforlife.com). You can read all of our newsletters online, and we also have updated information in many areas of our site. Be sure to visit us online!



Welcome Timothy

## OFFICE INFORMATION

**James D. Thomas, DDS**

**R. Paul Chappel, DDS**

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### 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

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Email [drthomas@asmileforlife.com](mailto:drthomas@asmileforlife.com)  
Web site [www.asmileforlife.com](http://www.asmileforlife.com)

### Office Staff

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

**Brush • Floss • Smile**

DISCOVER

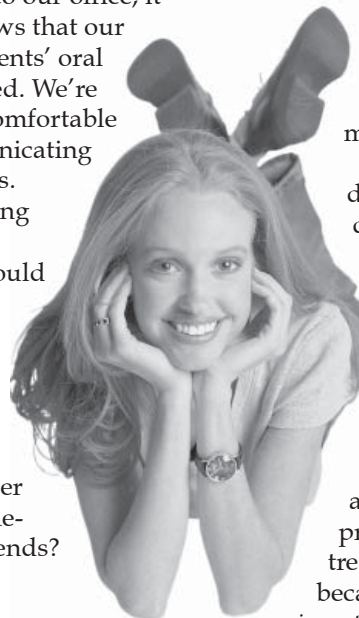


## Make Our Day

Surrounded by the busy thrum and bustle of an active, friendly dental practice, it's easy to think that there's no room for new patients. Nothing could be further from the truth. We love our work, and part of that is the excitement of getting to know new patients, as well as the satisfaction of successfully providing dental care for long-term clients.

When you refer your friends, colleagues, or family to our office, it makes our day. It shows that our dedication to our patients' oral health has been noticed. We're happy that you feel comfortable and at ease in communicating both *to us* and *about us*.

As our way of saying thanks, we would appreciate it if you would accept a \$25 credit for every referral who becomes a patient. Make sure they mention your name when they make their first appointment! After all, what's a little name-dropping between friends? Thank you for your confidence.



## The Economics Of Prevention

Our goal is to help you have the best possible oral health for a lifetime. But for some of our patients, only the high cost of repair is a motivator to adopt preventive habits. They know that the longer they wait, the more dental repairs will cost.

Decay in one tooth, if left untreated, will spread. Instead of one filling, you'll likely need a full crown,

increasing the cost by more than six times. Further delays could result in root canal treatment – an even more expensive procedure.

The early stages of gum disease are easy to treat with dental intervention and home care. Without these simple therapies, it can result in tooth loss and prosthetic options requiring a considerable investment of time and money.

It is never too late to start a preventive oral health program. We can develop a treatment plan with you because *prevention is the best investment!*

