

DENTAL WELLNESS* NEWSLETTER

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This issue marks the beginning of the second year of our Dental Wellness Newsletter. We are encouraged to continue presenting dental and general health information to you based on the feedback we are getting from our clients as well as other health professionals on our mailing list.

Dr. McBride

A Word to The Unwise

The importance of a child's first visit to the dentist cannot be overestimated. Ultimately, the state of a person's dental health through their lifetime is highly reflective of their relationship with their dentist. Those who have experienced poor early dental experiences tend to see the dentist less often, or shun the experience completely. Believe me, I've heard some interesting stories. Once the die is cast, it is very difficult to develop the degree of trust that I've found to be important in a client's continuing dental health.

Quite often I'm asked by parents when the best time is for their child's first dental visit. On average, it should be around the age of three. Not only do we check for cavities and start the learning process on the importance of self care, but at this stage orthodontic problems can many times be discovered. The primary goal of the first visit in our office is to make sure that the child receives a great experience. You don't get a second chance to make a first impression. The ideal scene is

when the parent is a client of the office and brings the child along with them to a regular dental visit. The child meets the staff and the dentist in a very friendly atmosphere, views his parent in the dental chair and becomes acclimated to the routine. I may ask the child if I can count his/her teeth, blow up a glove like a balloon and make a face on it or give them a high-five.

Parents with poor past dental experiences can ruin the chances of the child having a positive experience by saying things like "Don't worry, it won't hurt," etc Why even plant a negative seed? Through such negative talk by well-meaning but unwise parents, relatives or friends, chances for a positive first experience are thwarted from the get-go. I have seen the need for full sedation dentistry as a result of the child being exposed to this unwise talk. Words can be very dangerous and can stand in the way of a lifetime of dental health!

A NUTRITION BITE

The American public has been persuaded to wear blinders that let them see only fat and cholesterol as the key factors responsible for heart disease. There's little question that they play a role in heart disease, but they are not the unqualified culprits. It's

more important that your diet is rich in fruits, vegetables, greens, whole grains, nuts, etc. that supply the key nutrients that enhance your health. A body that is well nourished is better equipped to handle any fat and cholesterol it ingests.

* Wellness denotes health, and true health is based upon sound relationships bounded by mutual trust and respect between practitioner, staff and patient. It is an attitude that involves learning and development of common goals for prevention and treatment.

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Quote of the month

"True Excellence Occurs When Quality is the Constant and Time is the Variable"

Robert P. McBride

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CRACKED TEETH

It is a fact that people are living longer, which can subject their teeth to more problems over time. One of the trickiest dental problems to diagnose is that of a hairline fracture in a tooth. Quite often they occur under a filling and in areas in between the teeth that are not visible. They typically don't show up on an x-ray. The following Question/Answer format will help you discover whether or not you may have fractured tooth.

Do you have a cracked tooth?

When you bite down, you feel a sharp pain. It quickly disappears, and perhaps you ignore it. You avoid certain foods or chew only on one side of your mouth. Does this sound familiar? If so, you may have a cracked tooth.

What causes a tooth to crack?

A tooth may crack due to a variety of factors: chewing on hard objects or foods such as ice, nuts or hard candy; an accident, such as a blow to the mouth; grinding and clenching your teeth; uneven chewing pressure; stress on a tooth; loss of a significant portion of tooth structure through wear, large fillings or other restorations; exposure of tooth enamel to temperature extremes, such as eating hot

food and then drinking ice water; brittleness of teeth that have undergone endodontic (root canal) treatment.

How can you tell if a tooth is cracked?

It could be difficult. You may not even be able to tell which tooth is causing the problem by noting when and where you have sensitivity to heat, cold or sweet, sour or sticky food, as well as approximately where the pain is when you are chewing.

Why does a cracked tooth hurt?

A cracked tooth may hurt because the pressure of biting causes the crack to open. When you stop biting, the pressure is released and a sharp pain results as the crack quickly closes. Even though the crack may be microscopic, when it opens, the pulp inside the tooth may become irritated. The pulp is a soft tissue that contains the tooth's nerves and blood vessels. If the crack irritates the pulp, the tooth may become sensitive to temperature extremes. If the pulp becomes damaged or diseased as a result of the crack, root canal treatment may be necessary to save the tooth.

THE TRAIN WHISTLE



As most of you know, the first visit with me is in my private office, at which time my new client and I can get to know each other. This is an important time that lets me gather dental and medical health information, and to discuss what the client's desires are regarding their future dental health.

In the first article of this newsletter, I discuss the importance of the child's first dental visit and how it can affect the nature of his/her dental future. This new client meeting most often brings out these early dental experiences, and is an important step for the quality of future dental visits. Many people are fearful of needles, pain during treatment and the noise of the drill. Proper handling of these concerns can turn

a person around in no time. What I've found common with many who are fearful, is their loss of control while in the dental chair. To assuage this anxiety, I have developed a system where the client holds a small device with a button which when pushed, activates a 1957 Lionel train whistle that gives me notice to discontinue treatment. I have yet to have an adult actually push the button, but the value seems to lie in the fact that they know I'm serious about their comfort. Kids love it, and I have to let them get the novelty out of their system so they won't be tempted to use it during treatment when it may not be needed.

More about the train whistle and dental fear - client's & dentist's - on our website, www.rpmdentistry.com!

Staff News

Those in business know the truth in the aphorism "Good help is hard to find." After a lengthy search, I am happy to say that we have two new additions to our staff. Blanca Ozuna, a Registered Dental Assistant is our new clinical assistant. She brings to the office excellent skills, and an upbeat, cheerful disposition. Our extensive search has also allowed us to

find an Office Manager with the qualities required for our wellness-centered practice. Patience has paid off, as Karen Chitwood seemed to be looking for our practice as much as we were looking for her. Another quote by Francois De La Rochefoucauld - "The only thing constant in life is change" - is appropriate, as we expand & enhance our services for our clients.

Please let us know what topics you would like to hear about in upcoming issues.