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DENTAL WELLNESS* NEWSLETTER



Note from Doc What happened to Summer, it just got here! The ancient science of Feng Shui suggests we enjoy the movement of the Fall. It's a great time for organizing interiors, de-cluttering closets and drawers and see all that you have collected through the past few seasons! A great time to plan a gathering of friends to enjoy the beauty of nature and all that life has provided for you! This is a most colorful, joyous time of year, so kick back and enjoy the cornucopia of energy that surrounds us!
Dr. McBride

IS MERCURY REALLY SAFE IN YOUR MOUTH?

What about those black fillings that most adults beyond age 40 have in their teeth? They're commonly known as silver amalgam fillings, but would be more appropriately named mercury amalgams fillings, as they contain in excess of 50% mercury. The other components are approximately 20% silver, and 30% a combination of copper, tin and zinc.

The American Dental Association proclaims that aside from those who may be allergic to mercury, the substance is safe. The Association concedes that mercury vapor is emitted from these fillings, but indicates that the amount is not harmful. On the other side, there are those who vehemently disagree with this stance, and say that they are harmful from both the vapor as well as from galvanic action that produces a harmful current that flows through the body.

Several countries restrict the use of dental amalgams or have recommended limitations on their use. For example, Health Canada recommended that dental amalgam be avoided in people allergic to mercury or with impaired kidney function; if possible, to avoid its placement or removal in the teeth of pregnant women; and to consider the use of alternatives in the primary teeth of children. Some manufacturers now include these "contraindications" in their labeling of dental amalgams sold in those countries.

I discontinued using silver amalgams over 20 years ago, because there are better and more esthetic materials available. I also believe that when these fillings are placed, the mercury vapor released from mixing the elements day after day are dangerous for my assistant and me to breathe.

These fillings may replace a large area of a tooth that has been lost from decay, breakage, or both. Over time, the remaining weakened tooth structure usually fractures, sometimes to the extent of causing the tooth's loss. The amount of stress placed on the tooth from the metal and tooth expanding at different rates during quick temperature changes such as hot coffee to cold ice cream, can cause enormous stresses in an already weakened tooth.

Personally, I have had all of my silver amalgams removed and replaced. There is plenty of information about this controversy on the internet, such as <http://www.amalgam.org/#anchor630895> and http://www.dental-smile.com/1998/1-0-1998_3.htm. I also have an interesting video of TV and personal interviews covering both sides of the controversy that I loan out to those who may be interested in learning more about this subject.

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Quarterly Quote
 "Where the spirit does not work with the hand, there is no art."
Leonardo da Vinci

TREATMENT SUCCESSES

Problem: Unfortunately this young woman had to lose her upper two front teeth. Not too long ago, the only options for their replacement would have been a removable type bridge that would need to grasp several other teeth, or shave down the immediate adjacent teeth for a fixed type bridge.

Today's Solution: A team effort between myself and Dr. Mike Marshall, a talented oral surgeon, in developing the extraction sites for receiving two root replacement implants. A time of healing and esthetic development with temporary restorations. A final result with the assistance of a creative laboratory technician ceramist, Erik Haupt, who skillfully blended a myriad of colors to match the texture and hues of the surrounding teeth to make the final restorations even more attractive than her original teeth.



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* 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.



Saved by a straw? Sipping soft drinks and other beverages reduces risk of decay

Americans drink roughly 576 soft drinks every year - about one and a half cans a day for everyone in the United States. Drinking these beverages places the people who may not follow proper oral hygiene techniques at a higher risk for cavities and other oral health problems.

However, according to a report in the May/June 2005 issue of *General Dentistry*, the Academy of General Dentistry's (AGD) clinical, peer-reviewed journal, drinking soft drinks and other beverages through a properly positioned straw can help to minimize the risk of cavities.

The report tracked patient drinking habits and found that different factors - such as the frequency of sipping and the amount of time the beverage remains in the mouth - affect the type, location and severity of tooth decay.

For example, decay will be concentrated in the back molars of a person who drinks directly from a can and allows the liquid to pool in the mouth. Or, decay will be found on the teeth in the front of the mouth in a person who drinks through a straw positioned at the front of the mouth, right behind the lips.

"Your best option is to sip soft drinks and other beverages through a straw placed towards the back of the mouth," advises Mohamed A. Bassiouny, DMD, MSc, PhD, and lead reporter. "Doing so will limit the amount of time the beverage is in contact with the teeth."

However, even when drinking through a straw, the teeth located in the back of the mouth are still bathed with sugary and acidic liquids. "Try rinsing your mouth with water after drinking and use toothpaste that contains fluoride," advises AGD spokesperson Paula Jones, DDS, FAGD. "Your teeth aren't thirsty, your throat is."

Soft drinks contain one or more acids, commonly phosphoric and citric acids. Non-colas and canned iced teas also contain flavor additives, such as malic, tartaric and other organic acids, which are more aggressive at eroding teeth. They erode dental enamel, the thin outer layer of hard tissue that helps maintain the tooth structure and shape, while protecting it from decay.

A dentist can tell when a patient gets cavities from drinking acidic beverages, such as soft drinks, since the decayed areas are often darker in color and takes up more space on the tooth. The cavities also often appear near the gumline.

"Enjoying an occasional soft drink will likely not cause significant damage," says Dr. Bassiouny. "However, substituting these beverages as a replacement for water may cause significant, irreversible long-term problems and damage." Dr. Jones also encourages patients who have cavities caused by erosion to substitute a glass of water for one soft drink every day, and increase the water for soft drinks, until the soft drink intake has been severely limited.

Tips for Healthy Drinking: Reduce your soda consumption; Don't leave fluids in your mouth when sipping; Don't drink soda before going to bed; Don't brush immediately after drinking soda (the brush will harm the weakened enamel); If you have dry mouth, try to avoid carbonated beverages.

Fluoride For Adults?

We routinely provide fluoride applications to children during their decay prone years. Adults are also susceptible to cavities in the roots of teeth. Quite often they occur in areas that are very difficult to fill.

One of the most respected dental researchers in the world says that once you get a cavity on the root surface, it's the beginning of the end of the tooth. We try to fix it, but even after we've removed all the decay, the process continues, often creeping up again right under the filling or crown...and we have to cut it out further and further up under the gum. The problem is, the root surfaces are more than 700% softer than enamel.

Most adults have some gum recession. That's when the gum drifts higher up the tooth and exposes some of the root...often early recession is so small, it's not immediately apparent, and it doesn't have to be enough to be visible to put the tooth at risk.

Besides brushing and flossing, the best prevention for root cavities is FLUORIDE, and the best and most reliable fluoride delivery is immediately after your cleaning. This is due to a natural film layer the body will coat your teeth with within 24 hours after your cleaning. We have had effective fluoride for many years, but they were so incredibly acid bitter tasting, and the required application time was 5-7 minutes, that most adults refused to use them, myself included.

We are fortunate today to have fast acting, high strength fluorides that are extremely effective, taste great, and require only 20 seconds! I wouldn't allow my family or myself ever again to have a cleaning without immediately afterwards having the fluoride as well.

Team



News

Jenean, Karen and Blanca all enjoyed vacations with their families this August. They are well rested and ready to serve you with renewed energy and great ideas. We are looking forward to the Annual OBI (Orognathic Bioesthetics International) Conference coming up in October. It is always a great learning experience for us all. This year we will be going to Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Blanca is getting a taste of the empty nest syndrome. Her second daughter has just graduated from high school and has flown the coop. Blanca keeps the light on in case she wants to return.

Karen's son is on the Dean's List for Arizona State University. He's studying to be a pharmacist. Mom is just a we bit proud! Congratulations Sean!

Jenean is enjoying her condo and all the warm fuzzy feelings of owning her own home. She keeps her eyes wide open for new decorating ideas and enjoys getting tips from our clients. She is also looking forward to sharing the first fall season and holidays with family and friends in her new digs.



Presentations

Doc's next PowerPoint presentation will be on Thursday, October 19. If you really want to see what's up with modern dentistry, treat yourself to an informative hour-long compilation of a lifetime of dental knowledge in a comfortable setting while enjoying a light fare and refreshments!



Seasonal Drawings!

Congratulations to Payton Jones, age 6, for winning the Fourth of July Basket! Be sure to get your name in for the Autumn Basket. Our creative basket-maker and hygienist, Jenean, always seems to come up with new and different ideas for each of these wonderful gift baskets!



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

