



THE 2th, THE WHOLE 2th AND NOTHING BUT THE 2th

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2016 edition

Housekeeping Notes

- While we realize that there is parking in the road outside our premises, we should really appreciate it if you could park inside the property to avoid any inconvenience to the neighbours.
- Please remember that I am always available after hours should you have any problems. The after-hours number is (021) 683 0898 or 08257 08557.
- Past issues of the newsletter are on our webpage www.smilestudio.capetown

Health Snippets

a) X-Rays - when and why?

The use of x-rays in dentistry gives rise to much discussion. Many patients question whether x-rays are necessary at all. I believe the x-ray is used as a diagnostic aid to help make a diagnosis or confirm a problem. Where the diagnosis is unclear, one needs to examine the areas which are not visible such as the areas between the teeth and in the bone. Just as one has to look under the bonnet of a car to establish the cause of a problem, one has to take x-rays to get a full picture.

“What about the radiation?” you may ask. Happily today with the digital technology, a set of full mouth dental x-rays (10 x-rays) exposes you to the same background radiation you would get in a day just walking around or equivalent to 5 minutes in the sun. The fact is that, in all of medicine, dental x-rays expose one to the lowest radiation. My philosophy regarding routine x-ray examination is that if the teeth look suspicious or there are many fillings, I will take an initial set of x-rays and then repeat this every 3- 4 years. I, personally, do not believe this needs to be done every 6 months.

b) Vapour cigarettes

Vapour cigarettes are purported to be free of the damaging effects of regular cigarettes but 3 very recent studies show that they do the same damage. They were shown to harm the cells in the mouth to the same extent as conventional cigarettes. It would appear that it is the flavourants which are added, which cause the damage. The vapours produced by flavoured e-cigarette liquids include dangerous levels of hazardous chemicals known to cause cancer in human beings. The other studies showed that the vapours killed many of the cells in the mouth and that the damage to the teeth and gums was no less than conventional cigarettes.

c) Vaccine for gum disease

Periodontitis (gum disease) is responsible for the loss of gum and supporting bone around the teeth and the subsequent loss of the teeth. The bacteria which cause periodontitis are also implicated in increased risk of diabetes, heart disease, rheumatoid arthritis, dementia and certain cancers. Traditional treatment has been surgery and antibiotics which has at best slowed down the condition.

Good news at last is that a vaccine has been developed in Melbourne Australia which goes into clinical trials next year. This vaccine will target the bacteria which cause the condition and thereby prevent it!

To floss or not to floss? That is the question.



Marion Fayolle

The recent brouhaha resulting from an Associated Press report that there is no scientific evidence that flossing contributed to “fostering good oral health” resulted in much fallout and snide remarks. This report was based on 25 studies which looked at whether brushing + flossing was more effective than brushing alone.

This was just the cue that was needed for the anti-establishment lobby to jump on their bandwagon proclaiming loudly that this emphasis on flossing was all a ruse that had been perpetuated by the scientific closed community. It was also an opportunity for some members of the scientific community to question previous findings.

Let us examine this whole scenario more carefully. Cleaning between the teeth is not a new phenomenon. Evidence has been found in old Egyptian tombs of toothpicks fashioned from bones and plant material. Our own indigenous peoples used certain plants which could be plaited and used as floss. Thread floss came into existence in the late 1800's. However, it was the preventive dentistry revolution in the 1960's that was the main impetus to the promotion of the daily use of floss. Great modern researchers like Jan Lindhe showed that, in adults, plaque accumulating between the teeth caused both tooth decay and gum infection. Their findings were flawless and irrefutable. They identified the bacteria that caused decay and gum disease and found these in abundance in the areas between the teeth. What they didn't do, however, was to follow the protocols which came into place during the 1990's and do controlled studies in which one group of people is told the floss and another group is prohibited from flossing. And that forms the basis of the report - there were no controlled studies. Yet one should understand that often, science, logic and common sense outweigh the guidelines of the scientific community. One needs to ask whether it is correct and ethical to tell a sufficiently large group of people not to do something when you know it will cause harm. We also know that some people have a naturally high immunity to the bacteria in plaque (we all know folk who boast they never floss and often don't brush but never have problems). Hence if they are included in the study it would affect the statistics. The only correct way to do a controlled study is to tell the sample of people to floss half their mouth and not the other half for the 3 year period. To take this demand for control groups to its ridiculous conclusion, by its standards there is no scientific proof that parachutes saves lives of people jumping out of planes or that stopping at a red traffic light will prevent accidents. No one has ever done a control.

Above the Mayo clinic is the inscription: - “The aim of medicine is to eradicate disease: the ideal of medicine is to eradicate the physician”. The whole thrust of our preventive approach is to eliminate your needing a dentist. I hope you subscribe to that philosophy.



Scientific facts

- H₂O is hot water. CO₂ is cold water.
- To collect fumes of sulphur, hold a deacon over a flame in a test tube.
- Nitrogen is not found in Bloemfontein because it is not found in a free state.
- Water is composed of two gins, Oxygen and Hydrogin. Oxygen is pure gin. Hydrogin is gin and water.
- Blood flows down one leg and up the other.
- Artificial insemination is when the farmer does it to the cow instead of the bull.
- Dew is formed on leaves when the sun shines down on them and makes them perspire.
- Mushrooms always grow in damp places and so they look like umbrellas.
- The body consists of three parts- the brainium, the borax and the abominable cavity. The brainium contains the brain, the borax contains the heart and lungs, and the abominable cavity contains the bowls, of which there are five -- a, e, i, o, and u.

Receding gums



The ginigva (gums)

The gingiva (or gums) tightly cover the underlying jaw bone and will surround the neck of the tooth. The gingiva is usually tightly bound to the underlying bone to form a barrier against the bacteria which live in the plaque. The gingiva attaches just at the neck of the tooth where the enamel ends and hence protects the more vulnerable root dentine which does not have a protective enamel layer over it. Where the level of the gingiva drops below this junction of the enamel, the root is exposed to the ravages of these bacteria. This condition is called gingival recession. This can cause extreme sensitivity particularly to cold and to sweetness as the dentine is made up of hollow tubules and the sensations of cold and sweet travels straight to the nerve endings in the pulp of the tooth.

What causes this recession?

There are 2 main factors. Trauma from incorrect toothbrushing is by far the main culprit and it is usually the vigorous scrubbing motion which is to blame. Here the gum is physically damaged and shrinks to get away from the continued onslaught of the bristles of the brush. The other cause is plaque where the bacteria and the toxic products which lie within the layer of plaque damage the gum and cause inflammation. Initially the gum will become swollen and bleeds as a reaction to this but then the layer at the crucial junction just sloughs off and the margin will be lower down the tooth exposing the root.

Treatment is as conservative as possible. We do recommend an electric toothbrush as that helps prevent further loss and does effectively remove the plaque. We use desensitizing toothpastes as an ointment rubbed onto the offending area.

Occasionally we need to do gum surgery or do some form of restorative dentistry to correct an intractable sensitivity.

Vitamin D

Recently I saw a patient with unexplained gum problems. He seemed to be doing all the correct things at home - using an electric toothbrush, flossing nightly and coming for regular annual checks.

I started looking at other factors that could be causing the problem and found he was using excessive daily doses of Vitamin D which he thought was important to prevent osteoporosis.

Vitamin D is an essential constituent for health but too much can be as bad as too little.

One must understand that:-

- Vitamin D is essential for overall health including the health of the gums and other soft tissues in the mouth.
- To function properly, vitamin D needs other vitamins and nutrients.
- Long term excessive vitamin D supplementation can create blood levels that have been linked to decreased bone density and increased heart attacks, strokes, kidney stones and even death.

The best source of vitamin D is sunlight - daily exposure not to the extent that one gets sunburned but certainly somewhere between 15 -60 minutes a day depending on the time of the day, the amount of clothing being worn and the pigmentation of the skin.

Food is also a good source of the vitamin and this would include oily fish such as salmon, sardines, herrings as well as eggs

The third option is taking supplements and here one has to choose between vitamin D2 and Vitamin D3. The latter is the better of the 2 options but it is also important to remember that vitamin D is a fat soluble vitamin so it must be taken along with some fat for it to be absorbed. In addition ensure that Vitamin A and K, magnesium and potassium are included in the formulation as these are essential for the supplement to work correctly. Hence supplements may seem an easy answer but are in fact much more complicated to get right than sunshine and diet. If one does take supplements one should have blood tests done to ensure that the levels in the blood are correct.

An excellent BBC programme on this topic suggested that instead of taking your coffee break around the water cooler, take a little 10 minute stroll outside mid-morning and mid-afternoon.

I refer you to my previous newsletter and the article "Surprising facts about the Sun"

2 little boys aged 8 & 10 are very naughty and always getting up to mischief. Everyone in the town knows that when anything untoward happens, these kids will be responsible. Their mom hears of a preacher who will be visiting the town and he has been very successful in disciplining children so she implores him to speak to the boys. He agrees but insists he speak to them individually. The younger is sent over the next morning with the older one scheduled for the afternoon.

The preacher a huge man with a booming voice and a very generous beard sits the boy down and asks him sternly "Do you know where God is, son?" The boy is perplexed at the question and remains silent. At this the preacher in a louder voice leans over the desk and demands "Where is God?" The kid remains silent which provokes the preacher to lean even closer, shakes his finger at the boy and bellows "Where is God?"

The boy utters a terrified wail and bolts from the room and runs for home where his brother is anxiously waiting. "What happened?" he asks. The younger boy, gasping for breath, stammers "We are in big trouble this time. God is missing and they think we did it!"

Oh doctor, I can't lose weight. I have metal fillings in my teeth and the fridge magnets keep pulling me to the kitchen.



Metal Free Dentistry

There has been much movement in the past decade to provide metal-free dental restorations. The move started with the development of the tooth coloured filling materials and this was giving a hefty shove by the anti-mercury campaign. Whether this campaign was helped along by the big companies who had spent enormous sums of money in developing the tooth coloured materials will probably never be known but they were producing a material which cost almost 10 times the cost of the silver amalgam material.

Despite that fact these tooth coloured materials make up well over 90% of the restorations we place today, there is little doubt, in the research, that the old style metal amalgam material will last 3-4 times longer. In a previous newsletter I discussed at length my feelings about whether mercury does escape or not. In summary I have major reservations about that happening.

However, the big movement has been in metal-free crowns. As you all know a crown is a shell which fits over the entire tooth thereby covering and protecting it from further breakdown. The conventional crown is a metal shell to which porcelain has been bonded. Conventional porcelain has to be fired at a very high heat and this temperature is often higher than the melting point of the metal. To overcome this problem, porcelains were developed which could be fired at a lower temperature which wouldn't harm the metal substructure. The payoff was weaker porcelain. In these crowns, the metal provided the strength while the porcelain covered the metal and provided the aesthetics. Consequently the porcelain fused to metal crown was the crown of choice for the last 3 decades but the weak porcelain was a problem.

Enter the age of computerization. Now the model of the tooth is scanned into a computer and the crown is milled out of a solid block of ceramic (porcelain) material. This material is so strong that it will not fracture after being subjected to repeated sledge hammer tests. And it can be milled fairly thin so that we don't have to take away more tooth than is absolutely necessary. The only disadvantage is that one cannot get all the little distinctive characterization stains that one gets in a built up porcelain. Hence they are wonderful for molar teeth where we can achieve great strength and very adequate appearance. We continue to use the more conventional porcelain materials for the more visible teeth where we can duplicate the appearance of the other teeth very accurately with stains and tints.



A group of 40 year old buddies discuss and discuss where they should meet for dinner.

Finally it is agreed upon that they should meet at the Gausthof zum Lowen restaurant because the waitresses there have low cut blouses and nice breasts.

10 years later, at 50 years of age, the group meets again and once again they discuss and discuss where they should meet. Finally it is agreed upon that they should meet at the Gausthof zum Lowen because the food there is very good and the wine selection is good also.

10 years later at 60 years of age, the group meets again and once again they discuss and discuss where they should meet. Finally it is agreed upon that they should meet at the Gausthof zum Lowen because they can eat there in peace and quiet and the restaurant is smoke free.

10 years later, at 70 years of age, the group meets again and once again they discuss and discuss where they should meet. Finally it is agreed upon that they should meet at the Gausthof zum Lowen because the restaurant is wheel chair accessible and they even have an elevator.

10 years later, at 80 years of age, the group meets again and once again they discuss and discuss where they should meet. Finally it is agreed upon that they should meet at the Gausthof zum Lowen because that would be a great idea because they have never been there before.

Mr. Gable had a leak in the roof over his dining room, so he called a repairman to take a look at it. "When did you first notice the leak?" the repairman inquired. Mr. Gable scowled. "Last night, when it took me two hours to finish my soup!"

Snippets

- a) Great news is that a saliva test is being developed that will detect Alzheimer's disease as well as be able to predict its onset years before there is any clinical manifestation. The test picks up the presence of increased amyloid protein which is an indicator of the disease. The developer of the test stated that the results were remarkably accurate. As the saliva test is easy, non-invasive and accessible, once it is commercially available it could be done by the dentist on a regular basis. The earlier the condition is diagnosed, the earlier intervention can occur which alter the long term treatment of the condition.
- b) Dry Mouth is an increasingly occurring and vexing problem. Saliva is there to moisten and cleanse our mouths and digest food. Saliva also prevents infection by controlling bacteria and fungi in our mouth. So what happens when we don't make enough saliva and our mouth goes dry? This can cause a health problem as bacteria and fungi thrive in the dry environment and tooth decay and gum disease can increase significantly. Medication is the main cause of dry mouth and these medications include treatment for asthma, stress, allergies, sinus problems, cardiac conditions and many other medications. Chemotherapy is also a huge contributor. Aging, too, is a cause as the salivary glands are just not as active as they once were. Treatment is difficult. Once you are aware of the problem, ensure you are able to have frequent sips of water. Alcohol exacerbates the problem so be sure you take in regular fluids after your sundowner. Chewing sugar free gum does stimulate saliva so have those handy and utilize them often. Use of a room vaporizer often helps as well as becoming aware of mouth breathing and making a conscious effort to change that habit. Enhanced fluoride toothpastes and mouthwashes can help prevent the damage the lack of saliva causes.
- c) Previous newsletters have covered the use of sugarless chewing gum in controlling tooth decay and counteracting dry mouth syndrome as discussed above. A paper recently published demonstrated that chewing sugarless gum was as effective in removing bacteria in the mouth as brushing and flossing. The chewing gum actively traps the bacteria. This is obviously good news as a reduction of the bacteria in the mouth will inevitably lead to reduced plaque and hence better oral health.

Is google male or female?

Female because it doesn't let you finish a sentence before making a suggestion.

When you're from the farm, your perception is a little bit different. A farmer drove to a neighbour's farmhouse and knocked at the door. A boy, about 9, opened the door. "Is your dad or mom home?" said the farmer.

No, they went to town."

"How about your brother, Howard? Is he here?"

"No, he went with Mom and Dad."

The farmer stood there for a few minutes, shifting from one foot to the other, mumbling to himself, when the young boy says, "I know where all the tools are, if you want to borrow one, or I can give Dad a message."

"Well," said the farmer uncomfortably. "No, I really want to talk to your Dad, about your brother Howard getting my daughter Suzy pregnant." The boy thought for a moment, then says, "You'll have to talk to my Dad about that. I know he charges \$500 for the bulls and \$150 for the pigs, but I have no idea how much he charges for Howard."

