



## ***THE 2<sup>th</sup>, THE WHOLE 2<sup>th</sup> AND NOTHING BUT THE 2<sup>th</sup>***

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### ***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](http://www.smilestudio.capetown)

### ***Health Snippets***

a) Chocolate for memory enhancement:

We have written often about the benefits of dark chocolate. A recent small study showed that folk who drank a mixture containing a high concentration cocoa flavanols (the antioxidant in chocolate) performed, on average, like people 2 -3 decades younger than they were. Oh, before I forget, the study was funded by Mars Inc. (the chocolate manufacturer). But then, who is complaining. Chocolate is chocolate as long as it is dark.

Another study with dark chocolate showed that patients who cramped during exercise, were able to walk further after consuming chocolate. It is thought that the polyphenols act on the peripheral arteries allowing the extra exercise tolerance.

b) Coffee and diabetes

A surprise finding covering more than 1.6m people, reported that highest coffee consumers had the lowest diabetes risk. Those who drank 3 or more cups a day had a 37% lower risk of developing diabetes than those consuming 1 cup a day. There is a rub of course. It has to be black, caffeinated coffee. No sugar, no milk, no cappuccinos or lattes! And tea.....sorry but no effect.

But both tea and coffee inhibit tooth decay - tea due to a high fluoride content, coffee by preventing bacteria sticking to the teeth.

c) Sugar substitutes

Talking of coffee and tea, what about sweetening the beverage? We know aspartame and sucralose are to be avoided. Xylitol seems to be on the approved list. I will cover xylitol separately.

There is however, a move towards Agave, Stevia and Hoodia as sugar substitutes being natural products.

Agave is rich in sucrose and raises the level of triglyceride fat in the blood stream. These fats are responsible for blocking the arteries so perhaps avoid this one.

Stevia enhances the action of insulin in moving sugar into muscle cells, prevents the absorption of glucose from the gut and effects the amount of sugar the liver releases into the circulation. On balance this seems to be not a bad alternative to sugar.

Hoodia not only is a sweetener but also an appetite suppressant. However, it has deleterious effects on both heart function and the integrity of heart muscles. This artificial sweetener should be avoided.

### *Mouth (gum) guards - what do they really do?*

In the early study of gum guards in 1964 it was shown that where there was impact to the jaw, there were decreased forces transferred to the skull. These initial reports were confirmed in 1967. However these experiments were cadaver studies and neither researcher claimed that the gum guard would prevent concussion. However one has to consider the living person. The brain is basically floating inside the skull on a cushion of cerebrospinal fluid. This fluid acts as a shock absorber in the case of impact. When impact occurs, the skull is vigorously jerked from one position to another. The brain will snap to the opposite side and slams into the skull. This results in the release of proteins and inflammatory fluids. This outpouring of fluid will compress the brain as the skull is rigid. If the compression is very severe, it can interfere with vital functions and death can result. This is often the case in motor crashes or falling off a cliff. In sports injuries, this impact is not as damaging and concussion and/or headaches will result.

A mouthguard will certainly not prevent the sudden jerking of the skull or the resultant "whiplash" to the brain inside the skull. A well-fitting gum guard will, however, reduce the force of the lower jaw hitting the upper jaw and this will decrease the force transmitted to the brain and in this kind of trauma it can prevent concussion. Its main function is to protect the teeth, the oral tissues and the bones of the skull.

While contact sports such as rugby, soccer, hockey, basketball, boxing are obvious contenders for wearing protection, skateboarders, mountain bikers and gymnasts have all benefited from wearing them.

It is best to have a custom-made gum guard. The over-the-counter types are usually very thick and interfere with the bite in an exaggerated way and obviously don't fit snugly and thus offer questionable protection. The custom made type offer a better fit and are hence more comfortable and will not restrict the athletes breathing.



There's an old priest who got sick of all the people in his parish who kept confessing to adultery. One Sunday, in the pulpit, he said, "If I hear one more person confess to adultery, I'll quit!" Well, everyone liked him, so they came up with a code word. Someone who had committed adultery would say they had "fallen."

This seemed to satisfy the old priest and things went well, until the priest died at a ripe old age. About a week after the new priest arrived, he visited the mayor of the town and seemed very concerned. The priest said, "You have to do something about the sidewalks in town. When people come into the confessional, they keep talking about having fallen."

The mayor started to laugh, realizing that no one had told the new priest about the code word. Before the mayor could explain, the priest shook an accusing finger at the mayor and said, "I don't know what you're laughing about, your wife fell three times this week."

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Husband takes the wife to a disco. There's a guy on the dance floor living it large, break dancing, moon walking, back flips, the works.

The wife turns to her husband and says: "See that guy? 25 years ago he proposed to me and I turned him down." Husband says: "Looks like he's still celebrating!!"

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Children's Logic: 'Give me a sentence about a public servant,' said a teacher. The small boy wrote: 'The fireman came down the ladder pregnant.' The teacher took the lad aside to correct him. 'Don't you know what pregnant means?' she asked. 'Sure,' said the young boy confidently. 'It means carrying a child.'

## *The Deleterious Effects of Grinding and Clenching your Teeth.*

Grinding or clenching ones teeth is a subconscious habit. When it happens during sleep, it can be incredibly annoying for one's partner. If, however, it occurs during the day, one is often unaware of the habit. This phenomenon could be causing headaches, pain in the joint or muscles in front of the ear or wearing down of the teeth.

The condition is called bruxism and is often caused by the teeth not fitting together harmoniously. Teeth have cusps (the sharp elevated bits) and fossae (the hollow areas) and the cusps have to fit smoothly into the fossae. If this isn't happening, then we often have cusp to cusp contact which results in abnormal forces being generated. This is much the same as the force generated through a stiletto heel to the floor compared to a flat heel. The body may recognize that the tooth contact is not ideal or that the place where the teeth fit together smoothly isn't where the muscles are most relaxed and subconsciously will attempt to remove these interferences by wearing them down. Many will have experienced this when a new restoration or crown is placed and for the first day or two one keeps trying to grind it into place.

While officially bruxing is diagnosed as a chronic condition, it can be intermittent presenting particularly in times of stress. It serves as an outlet for tensions. It is fairly common in children where the teeth don't have such well-defined cusps and fossae or where the new teeth are erupting and invariably the habit will disappear. However, in adults, once the habit becomes established, it is difficult to break.

There are some simple solutions to apply.

- Caffeine and alcohol can worsen bruxism as both intensify our level of alertness and decrease the ability of the muscles to relax.
- Applying heat over the joint in front of the ear will ease the tenderness of the inflamed ligaments around that joint. It is this inflammation which is most usually responsible for the pain and headaches.
- Various relaxation techniques, yoga and meditation are of benefit as are a number of exercises used to decrease the tension on the ligaments.
- Chronic gum chewing is an aggravating factor.
- Use of a night bite appliance. This is a small plastic plate which is made to stop the teeth "getting together". Usually it only needs to be worn in times of stress and tension but many patients find they like to wear them regularly. They are small and unobtrusive so don't interfere with function.
- Have your bite checked. Often reducing the interfering cusps leads to a cessation of the grinding (even if it caused by tension) as then the "satisfaction" gained by the habit is no longer there.

Be kind to your dentist...they have fillings too.

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### Shampoo Warning!

I use shampoo in the shower! When I wash my hair, the shampoo runs down my whole body, and printed very clearly on the shampoo label is this warning,

"FOR EXTRA BODY AND VOLUME."

No wonder I have been gaining weight! Well! I got rid of that shampoo and I am going to start showering with **Dawn Dishwashing Soap**. Its label reads, "DISSOLVES FAT THAT IS OTHERWISE DIFFICULT TO REMOVE."



## **A Word on Penicillin Allergy.**

At a recent conference I attended a paper was presented which showed that 94% of patients claiming to be allergic to penicillin were in fact not allergic. Often the diagnosis was made when adverse effects of an infection presented. A skin test is a useful way to determine true allergy as penicillin still remains one of the most effective and least expensive drugs we have with the fewest side effects.

## **More snippets.**

- Crowding of the lower front teeth- A question we frequently get asked is whether the wisdom teeth will cause the lower front teeth to become crowded. While orthodontists tend to insist that wisdom teeth must be removed, there is no actual evidence that once they are out the crowding will not occur. Measurement of the pressure exerted by the erupting wisdom teeth is very low and certainly not enough to cause movement in the front of the mouth. If one looks at the timeline of the problem, wisdom teeth erupt at around 18 - 20 years while the crowding of the lower front teeth tends to happen at least 10 years later which is long after the pressure of the erupting wisdom teeth would have happened. Crowding seems to be more influenced by the way the jaw moves and by long term postural changes.
- Xylitol- as mentioned earlier, this agent is perhaps the preferred artificial sweetener. It has 40% fewer calories than sugar, does not require insulin for its action and has a low glycemic index. Xylitol effects bacterial growth by changing the pH of the environment as well as being absorbed into the bacteria and inhibiting their reproduction. This is particularly effective against the bacteria causing tooth decay but it is now also being used to treat infected diabetic ulcerations and lung infections. In the mouth it also prevents the bacteria from sticking to the tooth rendering the plaque less problematic. When incorporated as a sweetener into chewing gum, it has been found to be effective against tooth decay. Many studies have been done and no deleterious effects were found. It is safe to use in pregnancy.
- Probiotics- Probiotics have long been used to promote healthy bacterial population in the intestine but it would appear that in the mouth probiotics will also reduce the number of harmful bacteria and thereby decrease the incidence of tooth decay, gum infection and halitosis. It is likely to be incorporated into gum or sugarless mints.



At Sunday school, they were teaching how G~d created everything, including human beings. Little Johnny seemed especially intent when they told him how Eve was created out of one of Adam's ribs. Later in the week, his mother noticed him lying down as though he was ill, and she said, "Johnny, what is the matter?"

Little Johnny responded, "I have pain in my side. I think I am going to have a wife."

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Old Aunt Dora went to her doctor to see what could be done about her constipation. "It's terrible," she said, "I haven't moved my bowels in a week." "I see. Have you done anything about it?" asked the doctor. "Naturally," she replied, "I sit in the bathroom for a half-hour in the morning and again at night." "No," the doctor said, "I mean do you take anything?"

"Naturally," she answered, "I take a book."

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At his 103rd birthday party, my grandfather was asked if he planned to be around for his 104th. "I certainly do," he replied. "Statistics show that very few people die between the ages of 103 and 104."