

your dentist

Newsletter of Your Dentist Dental Centre

YOUR PRACTICE NAME HERE

Your Dentist™ dental patient newsletters are personalised with all the details of your individual practice including contact details, opening hours, location, services and more.

You also receive a free web page on our find-a-dentist™ service. See a sample at: <http://www.dentist.com.au/demo>

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Facsimile: (02) 9438 2999

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Here's a sample of what you can include about your practice:

DENTISTS

Dr Roy Douglas, BDS
Dr Virginia Douglas, BDS
Dr Nadine Walker, BDS

HOURS

Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5.30pm
Thursday 8.00am to 8.00pm
Saturday 8.00am to 1.00pm

LOCATION

Explain the exact location of the practice with the nearest corner or landmark.

PARKING

Include information for your patients on where to park at the practice, street parking or parking stations.

SERVICES

Tell patients about your practice here and list the range of services you provide. The newsletters are designed as a professional way to keep in regular contact with your patients by advocating good oral hygiene in a non-threatening manner.

ORDERING

Simply complete and return the Your Dentist Application Form to receive a draft of how your practice information will look. Your newsletters, your individual style. For ordering purposes, this is:

EDITION 3

Do you have bad breath?

In medical terms, bad breath is known as Halitosis and affects 50% to 60% of the population.

It is generally agreed that the source of bad breath is a group of sulphur-containing compounds which are produced in the mouth or nasal areas. These compounds are created by the breakdown of bacteria and are known as Volatile Sulphur Compounds (VSC).

Disturbances of the digestive system may cause bad breath but the stomach is not generally the main source. Eating foods such as onions and garlic will result in bad breath.

The first step in treating bad breath is detection. A test for separating nasal and oral bad breath is to pinch the nose, breath-in, and then close the mouth. A dentist may use a machine called a halimeter which



There are many causes of bad breath but the main ones are diseased gum tissues and tooth decay. Gum diseases such as gingivitis or the more advanced periodontitis need to be detected immediately. With periodontitis, the gum loses its attachment to the tooth, and a pocket develops. Within this pocket, bacteria accumulates that can produce VSC.

Dryness of the mouth can also cause halitosis. Saliva is a strong antibacterial substance, and without it, bacteria can grow. A dry mouth can be caused by certain diseases or as a side effect of medicines taken to treat conditions such as high blood pressure.

Sinusitis and tonsillitis cause bad breath as the mucus is attacked by bacteria in the throat or nose to produce VSC. Other diseases like diabetes and hepatitis can sometimes be a contributing factor in halitosis.

detects sulphurous compounds in the breath, but it can be argued that the human nose is the most effective instrument for detecting halitosis.

Mouthwashes reduce the number of bacteria in the mouth and help reduce halitosis. They are only partially effective, and if used as the only method of combatting bad breath, the improvement will only be temporary.

Tongue cleaning is also an essential factor in beating bad breath. The cleaning should be directed towards the back of the upper surface of the tongue. This can be done with a specially designed tongue scraper which can be bought from your dentist.

Sugar-free chewing gum will increase saliva flow and help combat a dry mouth.

~Pregnancy and healthy teeth~

During pregnancy, differing levels of hormones in the body can place you more at risk of developing gum disease.

The way to avoid this potential problem is to brush your teeth and gums, using a soft toothbrush gently, and thoroughly both morning and night. Dental floss should also be used to clean between the teeth. If gums become red and sore and start to bleed, it's vital to continue the brushing technique or the condition will become worse.

It is important that you visit your dentist during the first stage of pregnancy to ensure that your teeth and gums are healthy. Ask your dentist to show you how to correctly use your toothbrush and dental floss. Be sure to consult with your dental professionals about the use of dental x-rays and local anaesthetic injections during the first trimester of your pregnancy.

Morning sickness can often affect pregnant women. If you experience morning sickness during the first month of your pregnancy, try to rinse your mouth with water immediately after vomiting. This will help to neutralise the acids from the stomach which can cause the tooth enamel to dissolve. Do not brush your teeth immediately after vomiting, however, as enamel softened by stomach acid is more readily removed by the abrasive action of the toothpaste and brush.

Pregnant women often experience cravings for certain foods. These snacks need to come from food



groups which are low in sugar and fat. Sweet snacks should be avoided because they are the highest source of dental decay.

Fluoride is found in the water supply of most Australian cities and towns and also in most toothpastes. Fluoride has several effects: it makes the surface of the tooth more resistant to decay; it helps reduce early decay and repairs the surface of the tooth; and finally it helps reduce the build up of plaque on the teeth. If fluoride is not in the local water supply, then speak with your dentist. A fluoride supplement may be needed during pregnancy.

It is important to establish and maintain a balanced diet that is low

in sugar and high in calcium. Know the five food groups, and eat foods from each group in every meal. The food groups are (1) breads and cereals, (2) dairy products, (3) meat, fish and nuts, (4) fruits and vegetables, and (5) fats.

A baby's teeth grow soon after a woman becomes pregnant. They continue to develop throughout the pregnancy. At four months into the pregnancy, calcium and phosphorous is needed to help the baby's teeth calcify. Towards the end of the pregnancy, more calcium is needed and can be obtained from eating calcium rich foods like dairy products.

Newborn babies do not have the bacteria in their mouths which can cause tooth decay. Their first teeth will come into the mouth around 6 to 10 months of age. Bacteria can be passed on to the baby by their parents through food tasting, kissing and/or cleaning a dummy in their own mouths.

You can reduce and delay the transfer of bacteria to your baby by thoroughly cleaning your own teeth. Eating sensibly and reducing the number of times a day that you eat sweet foods and drinks will help prevent decay for you and your baby.

The key points to remember when pregnant are regular dental check-ups, good oral hygiene habits, balanced diet, avoiding sweet foods and soft drinks, increasing calcium intake and changing your toothbrush regularly.

Ask your dentist

Do you want to know more about the information on this page? Ask your dentist and they will be happy to help.

Don't eat the toothpaste

Parents should be aware of the possible dangers to small children if they eat toothpaste. Young children are often partial to eating toothpaste because of the nice flavour and the swallowing reflexes of children under two years of age are not properly developed, resulting in them tending to swallow toothpaste while brushing. Swallowing too much fluoride from toothpaste can result in dental fluorosis of the adult teeth. This condition can affect enamel, resulting in brown or black discolouration of the teeth. Toothpaste with fluoride (even special children's toothpastes) should only be used under parental supervision. For more info, ask your dentist.

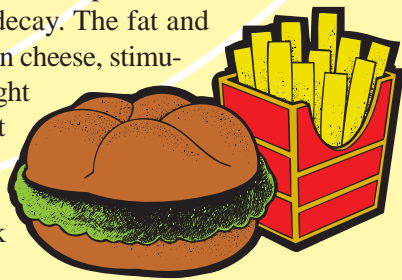


Smokers and gum disease

Smokers are more likely to suffer from gum disease than non-smokers. Symptoms of gum disease are harder to detect in smokers as well, which means diseased gums could go unnoticed until permanent damage is done, possibly leading to loss of teeth. It can be difficult to perform gum surgery on a person who smokes because of delayed healing and the ill-shaped and spongy tissue condition prominent in smokers. For more info, ask your dentist.

Stop snacking

Children who constantly snack too late could be ruining their teeth. Frequent sweet snacks washed down with soft drinks can damage tooth enamel. If the teeth can't be cleaned immediately to remove food particles, eating cheese after the sweets will help neutralise the acid and help prevent decay. The fat and salt which is contained in cheese, stimulates saliva needed to fight decay. However, the best solution is to stop snacking in the first place. For more info, ask your dentist.

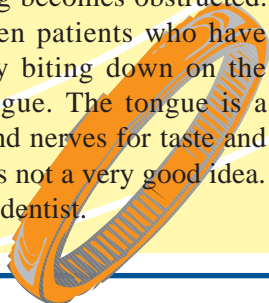


Did you know?

The toothbrush industry in the U.S. is worth just under \$1 billion. At this stage, there are no figures available for Australia. Today's toothbrushes are curved, arched and/or waved. They are rubber gripped and have slick ergonomic shapes. The nylon bristles are micro-textured, multi-coloured, multi-levelled and multi-angled. They can be flexible or rigid. There is now a toothbrush available to suit any personal taste because dental manufacturers are constantly releasing new models. New production technologies and materials have also had a part to play in the 'evolving toothbrush scene' but it seems the real change has been coming from consumer demand. For more info, ask your dentist.

Piercing problems

Getting your tongue pierced can lead to fractured teeth, infection, airway blockage and can even hamper chewing. There have also been reported cases of the studs coming loose and being swallowed. Probably the most dangerous complication is if the tongue swells up from infection, then breathing becomes obstructed. Many dentists have seen patients who have fractured their teeth by biting down on the metal stud in their tongue. The tongue is a muscle full of tissues and nerves for taste and speech, and piercing it is not a very good idea. For more info, ask your dentist.



Are soft drinks really okay?

A new study into carbonated soft drinks undertaken by the University of Iowa has recently received media attention. The report indicated that most soft drinks contain enough fluoride to be considered a significant source of the cavity-fighting substance. The researchers reported an analysis of 332 carbonated soft drinks and found on average they contained a significant amount of fluoride. However, dentists have always frowned upon these popular beverages and are unlikely to change. Soft drinks contain an even more significant amount of acid and sugar which causes damage to tooth enamel. For more info, ask your dentist.



Sedation can help overcome fear

Many people avoid going to the dentist because of the fear of dental procedures. Conscious sedation can provide anxiety relief and often overcome fear.

Sedation is the use of a drug which relaxes the central nervous system enabling treatment to be carried out by the dentist, while still allowing the patient to communicate.

Your dentist will use the simplest form of sedation which will enable successful treatment to be given. For example, some patients respond well to nitrous oxide and oxygen (laughing gas) while others cope better with a valium-type drug.

There are many ways of being sedated and your dentist will discuss with you what treatment best suits you. Before sedation can be offered, your dentist will take a full medical history and may liaise with appropriate medical practitioners if necessary. In some cases, blood tests may be needed before an appointment is made.

The simplest form of sedation is your dentist explaining the treatment and helping to allay any fears that you might have.

Nitrous oxide and oxygen sedation can be administered through a nose mask making you feel warm and relaxed. This technique is also known as Relative Analgesia (RA) and works particularly well with children. Your

dentist simply places a small mask on the nose and varies the amount of nitrous oxide through a special machine until you are comfortable and relaxed.

Oral sedation is another option to help alleviate fear. This is achieved simply by your dentist prescribing a medication which will make you drowsy and relaxed. This technique



can also be used in conjunction with nitrous oxide for deeper sedation.

Intravenous sedation is a technique whereby drugs are injected until the desired effect is achieved. You normally remember very little but still co-operate with your dentist and wake up relaxed and calm. Your dentist will use a local anaesthetic after the sedation and may also inject a pain-killer if the procedure involves surgery. Prior to any injection into the arm, your dentist may advise using a special patch over the injection area to numb the area.

If you choose sedation, you must not eat or drink for at least six hours before your appointment. You

should not smoke for at least 24 hours before the appointment. It is a good idea to dress warmly in cold weather and wear gloves, as this helps make the veins easier to find. Contact lenses should not be worn due to the possible drying effect of the drugs used. It is important that your dentist knows of all medications you are taking, and also any changes to your medical history including all known allergies. You must be accompanied by a responsible adult and driven home in a car or taxi. Public transport is not an option after sedation.

Instructions will be given to you and your escort after the sedation and dental treatment is completed. You will be advised how to care for your mouth; and not drive vehicles or operate machinery for at least 12 hours after sedation. You must not leave the surgery until told by your dentist.

New techniques of sedation are being developed at many centres throughout the world. Some sedative drugs can be squirted into the nose, injected into the mouth or given through skin patches. The main emphasis of modern sedation is to allow dental treatment to be carried out on anxious patients in the safest possible manner, and research is continually being carried out to improve drugs and techniques.

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