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Thurs.: 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Fri.: 7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Our Services Include:

- General & Restorative Dentistry • Bridges
- Cosmetic Dentistry • One-Hour Whitening
- Natural-Looking Fillings • Porcelain Veneers
- Invisible Braces • Periodontal Treatment
- Root Canal Therapy

Compliments of Dr. Raymond J. Finnerty, Dr. Linda W. Wu, Dr. Rosario T. Palabrica



Oral Health News



MATERNITY DENTAL BENEFIT

Good news for our patients with TRICARE Dental Program insurance. The maternity benefit coverage has expanded for TDP enrollees. Effective for services rendered on or after June 16, 2008, pregnant TDP members are eligible for an additional (third) cleaning during a consecutive 12-month period.

Women can experience increased gingivitis, or PREGNANCY GINGIVITIS, beginning the second or third month that increases in severity through the eighth month. During this time increase bleeding, redness and/or tenderness in the gum tissue may occur.

If you're pregnant, or planning to become pregnant, you need to know that your periodontal health can affect the health of your baby. Studies have shown any infection during pregnancy, including periodontal infection, is cause for concern because it may put you at risk for delivering a premature, low birth weight baby. Why take the chance? Include periodontal health in your prenatal care. A healthy mouth will give you, and your baby, something to smile about!

We have always recommended all of our pregnant patients to have an additional cleaning during their pregnancy. We are pleased that TDP insurance has now recognized the importance of periodontal health during pregnancy. We encourage you to contact your insurance company and inquire about similar benefits.



SENSITIVE ISSUES



People who have teeth that are sensitive to heat or cold, sweet or sour foods or drinks, or even breathing in cold air, can experience anything from a mild twinge of discomfort to a full-blown jolt of pain when their teeth are exposed to the irritant. What are some of the causes of sensitive teeth?

When a patient complains of pain from a sensitive tooth, we will first check to see if you have any decayed or fractured teeth. If this type of damage isn't apparent, the next step is a process of elimination, as teeth can feel sensitive for a number of different reasons, including:

RECEDING GUMS. The visible part of our teeth is covered by a hard layer of enamel, which maintains the tooth structure and shape, while protecting the softer dentine inside. When gums recede (because you're using a hard toothbrush and brushing too hard, because of gum disease, or even because of simple aging), the absence of gum over your tooth roots, which are not covered by the protective enamel, exposes the tiny dentinal channels leading to the tooth's nerve center (pulp). If you think of your gums as a protective blanket for the roots of your teeth, you can appreciate the job your gums do to keep those roots covered. When the "blanket" is absent, the exposed roots can be irritated, which travels into the nerves in the tooth, causing discomfort.

A CRACKED TOOTH OR FILLING. A crack in the tooth may run from the biting surface right down to the root. Extreme temperatures tend to trigger pain. A cracked tooth can be difficult to diagnose both visually and by X ray, but needs to be identified as it can eventually lead to a tooth abscess if not taken care of.

TOOTH GRINDING. Many people clench and grind their teeth unknowingly, often while they're asleep. This can cause their tooth enamel to eventually wear away, leading to sensitivity.

ENAMEL EROSION. Repeated exposure to acidic foods and drinks can eventually wear away the protective tooth

enamel. For example, soft drinks and energy drinks can damage tooth enamel over time by dissolving the mineral structure of the teeth. If you do indulge in soft drinks or energy drinks, keep these tips in mind:

- Use a straw, positioned at the back of the mouth, to help the liquid bypass the front teeth and shorten the exposure of the drink to your tooth enamel.
- Rinse your mouth out with water after drinking an acidic beverage. Do not brush your teeth for 20 minutes after consumption so as not to destroy the weakened enamel.
- Try and consume acidic foods and drinks in one sitting, as opposed to nibbling and sipping throughout the day, to minimize the amount of time the teeth are exposed to the acids.

TOOTH WHITENING. Temporary tooth sensitivity due to whitening is common. It's important for a dental professional to prescribe the proper course of whitening. Drugstore whitening kits do not provide the ideal combination of fitted whitening tray, percentage of whitening solution and dental supervision that you get at the dental office. Ask us how to prepare yourself before, during and after the whitening procedure.

Make sure you mention your sensitive teeth to us during your next visit. It's important for us to have a look at the sensitive tooth, especially if the pain is intense or prolonged, as we will want to ensure that the problem is simply a sensitive tooth and not anything more serious.

HIGH ALERT!

HOW'S YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE?



High blood pressure, or hypertension, affects an estimated 25 to 30 percent of our population. It is known as the “silent killer” because in many cases, the patient is not aware of any problems, and doesn’t notice any symptoms. Normal blood pressure is 120/80, and anything over this on a consistent basis is considered high. Hypertension can be a contributing factor to heart failure, strokes, kidney failure and blindness.

Hypertension is usually linked to one of these primary risk triggers: tobacco use, poor nutrition, obesity and lack of exercise. If you’re diabetic too, your chance of developing hypertension is especially high.

Please be sure to tell us if you have high blood pressure. We will then keep this in mind when scheduling your dental

appointment. For example, because the increase in blood pressure in a hypertensive patient is associated with the hours immediately after waking up, usually peaking by midmorning, we will recommend an afternoon appointment when the fluctuation of blood pressure is less likely.

As much as we try to keep our dental environment friendly and relaxing, it’s common to feel some anxiety about some dental treatments. You may want to use a sedative the night before a dental procedure to help counter any rise in blood pressure. Avoiding caffeine before the appointment, and even scheduling shorter appointments may help too.

Please keep us aware of your overall health issues so that we can do our best to safely accommodate your dental needs.

THINGS THE TOOTH FAIRY FORGOT TO MENTION

If you’re scheduled to have a tooth pulled, you need to be prepared not only for what the procedure itself involves, but also how to care for your mouth following the extraction.



In many cases, patients aren’t given post-operative care instructions until the extraction is complete, and they are wobbling out the door. Take a minute to read these tips, so that you’re better prepared if or when the time comes.

Depending on the surgery, you’ll most likely have painkillers in your system when you leave the office, so consider having someone available to drive you home, and to fill any prescriptions for you.

Once you get home you may want to celebrate having the troublesome tooth out of your way, but be warned... this is not the time to have an alcoholic drink! In fact, avoid alcohol for at least 24 hours as it can encourage bleeding and delay healing. Be careful with all foods and drinks, especially hot ones, until the anesthetic wears off. You won’t be able to feel heat properly and may burn or scald your mouth.

The first 24 hours after surgery is critical for the recovery of the affected area. Don’t panic if there is some bleeding following the procedure. Avoid rinsing out your mouth for the first day, instead pressing a patch of clean gauze firmly on the bleeding socket and holding it for at least 15 minutes each time. Replace the gauze as necessary, and call us if the bleeding persists. Keep ice packs or even bags of frozen peas handy to apply to any swelling on your face. After the first 24 hours, rinse your mouth out twice a day with a glass of warm salt water to encourage the healing process.

While the tooth fairy may not be leaving any money under your pillow this time, getting rid of a diseased or damaged tooth will pay for itself many times over in improved dental comfort and health.

REASONS TO VISIT YOUR DENTIST (That may have nothing to do with teeth!)

Do you experience constant headaches? Earaches and ringing in the ears? Pain, or clicking noises in your jaw? Please let us know. You may suffer from a temporomandibular disorder (TMD).

How do you sleep? Do you wake up tired, or is your sleep partner fatigued from staying awake due to your snoring? You may have sleep apnea.

Do you have diabetes? Diabetics require more frequent dental attention.

And how's your social life? If people step back or turn away when you get close to them to talk, you could have a problem with halitosis – commonly known as bad breath.

These common problems are only some of the many that your dentist can help you with.

The temporomandibular joint allows us to open and close our mouths and move our jaws. If a person grinds or clenches their teeth, they can sometimes trigger TMD. Symptoms may include pain in the head, face, jaw, neck and shoulders, earaches or ringing in the ears. Ask us about a dental appliance that may help.

Sleep Apnea is a potentially dangerous condition where a person has frequent episodes throughout the night in which he or she stops breathing. People with sleep apnea also tend to snore heavily. Consider visiting a sleep clinic, and talk to us about a dental appliance to keep your airway open and your breathing steady.

Diabetics tend to have a higher than average risk of periodontal (gum) disease. Bacteria thrive in the mouths of diabetics when there are high glucose levels present, and this increased level of bacteria, in conjunction with the patient's reduced ability to resist infection, can lead to an increased risk of gum disease.

Halitosis, or bad breath, can come from a number of different sources, from a dry mouth, bacterial decomposition of food particles in and around your teeth and foods that contain certain sulfur compounds, to a variety of medical conditions. Most everyday bad breath, however, can be controlled with good dental hygiene, and maintaining regular dental checkups so that we can check for periodontal disease — a treatable cause of bad breath — during your routine exam.



Pictured left to right:
Drs. Palabrica, Finnerty & Wu

Welcome to the latest issue of our newsletter. We're pleased to have this opportunity to say hello, and to provide dental updates you and your family may find helpful.

Our objective is to remind you of the importance of regular, consistent dental care to preserve your optimum oral health. Of course, a whiter, brighter smile is always an attractive goal for you too, so when you call to schedule your continuing care appointment, make sure to ask us about the latest, most effective cosmetic options.

Enjoy this newsletter, and please pass it on to a friend or family member who may enjoy reading up on the latest dental health news.

We look forward to seeing you soon!

All the best,

Dr. Raymond J. Finnerty
Dr. Linda W. Wu
Dr. Rosario T. Palabrica

SEE YOU LATER!

You may have heard that the right number of times to visit the dentist for regular continuing care appointments is two per year. However, your friend just told you that she's been told to go every three months, while your co-worker only goes once a year. Why the difference, and more importantly, what's the right number of annual dental visits for you?

Your schedule for continuing care appointments will depend on specific dental issues such as amount of plaque and calculus buildup, decay rate, your susceptibility to gum disease and specific health issues such as diabetes, immunosuppressive conditions or even pregnancy, that tend to lead to a higher risk of gum disease. As your dental office, our job is to analyze your specific dental situation, and recommend the right maintenance schedule and treatment course for your individual needs.

Remember, preventive dentistry is always less invasive, more comfortable and – like regular oil changes for your car – more cost-effective than having to fix a problem that was ignored. If you haven't already made an appointment for your next dental visit, please be sure to call us today.

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