



Dental Health News®

Compliments of Joseph A. DeLapa, D.D.S.

News From the Office of:



Dr. Joseph A. DeLapa

As a fresh new year looms ahead, let's take a moment now to confirm some healthy, personal resolutions.

A good work/play balance should be on our 2013 agenda, with a promise that we'll take better care of ourselves from both a mental and a physical state. As your dental office, we'd like to remind you that both of these have a direct bearing on your dental health, from excess stress that can cause you to grind or clench your teeth, to the unhealthy foods you put in your mouth.

Remember, an excellent preventive measure to avoiding serious dental problems is to maintain a regular schedule of continuing care visits which will detect any problems early, before they become big, expensive issues. In fact, if you haven't already booked your next checkup, why not take a minute to do so now?

All the best to you and your family for a happy and healthy 2013!

Joseph A. DeLapa, D.D.S.

Dr. Joseph A. DeLapa

TURN BACK THE CLOCK THROUGH DENTISTRY!



Like anything else, teeth naturally wear down with age, while the tooth enamel thins. In addition, years of staining foods and drinks, in conjunction with tobacco habits, can darken your tooth enamel to contribute to an "older" appearance of your teeth – and your overall look. But what if you could turn back the clock and reverse some of the signs of aging on your smile? Here are some ways we can help!

Depending on how worn your teeth are, or if they include any tiny chips or are misshaped in any way, we may be able to correct minor imperfections by simply polishing the worn edges and sharp angles of your teeth to make them look more aligned and symmetrical.

Teeth that are stained or have small gaps, slight misalignments, or chips may benefit from dental bonding – sculpting tooth-colored resin composite on your teeth to correct the flaws. Teeth with more visible cosmetic imperfections can be corrected with the application of natural-looking porcelain veneers or dental crowns.

Like the shape of your teeth, but not the color? The easiest way to brighten your smile –

and subsequently take years off your appearance – is by professionally whitening your teeth. Don't fall prey to the "whiter is better" school of thought though. There's a right "white" for you – one that we will help you select – that will enhance, not distract from, your natural appeal. And while we're talking about color, let's not forget about those unsightly metal fillings at the back of your mouth. Please know that dark, amalgam fillings can now be replaced with natural-looking, tooth-colored composite resin fillings.

Bringing your smile back (in time) means considering both the color and the shape of your teeth. Ask us how to best brighten, reshape, and rejuvenate your smile!

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AFTER THE TOOTH FAIRY LEAVES...

The timing and process of teething varies from child to child, with some babies surprising everyone with a tooth at three months, and others worrying their parents with gummy grins until they're a full year old.

By the time your "permanent" teeth are in, your lifelong dental care process should be established. But what happens if you lose one of your permanent teeth or have to have it removed?



Once teeth start growing in, they progress at a rapid rate until the child has a full set of 20 "baby" teeth by about age three. At around age six, these primary teeth start falling out as the permanent teeth begin to push through the gums. The child will continue to lose primary teeth until about age 12, adding permanent teeth until about age 21, when all 32 of the permanent teeth should have erupted.

In an ideal world, you would keep all of your teeth from that point forward, but in reality there are some situations where you may need to have one or more of your pearly whites professionally removed. The reasons for tooth extraction may range from having to pull a stubborn baby tooth to make room for a permanent one, to needing to remove a decayed tooth that threatens to affect the surrounding teeth and jaw, to teeth extraction for orthodontic reasons, to wisdom teeth removal. Whatever the reason for having to pull a tooth, it's vital to follow some basic post-extraction instructions:

1. After the tooth is pulled, place a folded piece of sterile gauze on the extraction site, and bite or press down on it to keep it in place for at least 60 minutes following surgery. Gently replace the gauze as necessary.
2. It's crucial to remember not to smoke following surgery, and not rinse your mouth or spit forcefully on the first day, as this could dislodge the site's blood clot and delay healing. Also – very important – do not suck on a straw as it could disrupt the healing process, possibly leading to an uncomfortable condition called "dry socket."
3. Place ice packs – a bag of frozen peas wrapped in a tea towel works well also – on your jaw with a

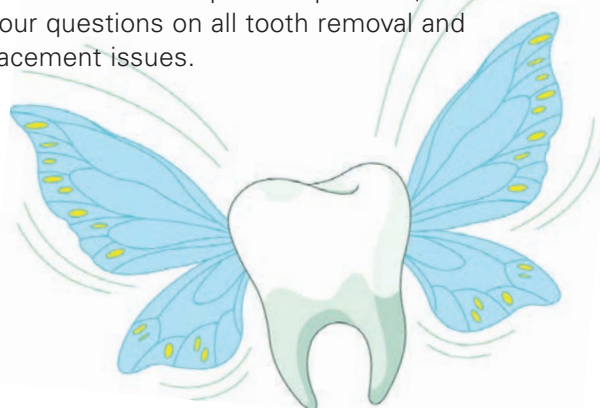
"15 minutes on, 15 minutes off" schedule for the first 24 hours. This helps reduce facial swelling and may provide some comfort.

4. On the second day, you may gently rinse your mouth with a solution of half a teaspoon of salt to one quart of water, several times a day.

Any gap left by a missing tooth (baby teeth, wisdom teeth and teeth removed for orthodontic reasons excepted) will need to be filled to ensure optimum health, and the positioning and visual appeal of the remaining teeth. Tooth replacement options can include one or more of the following:

- Removable partial dentures.
- Fixed dental bridges.
- Full dentures, for patients who have lost all of their teeth on the top and/or bottom of their mouth.
- Dental implants, surgically implanted replacement tooth roots capped with natural-looking replacement teeth.

We're here to make sure your smile is as healthy, attractive and as complete as possible, and welcome all your questions on all tooth removal and replacement issues.



BUILDING A BOND WITH YOUR DENTIST



Even though teeth are remarkably strong, accidents do happen, often (as Murphy's Law would have it) to the noticeable teeth at the front of your mouth. If you found yourself with a chipped tooth, what would be your best option for repair?

In many cases, your best bet for an easy, economical and effective cosmetic restoration is with dental bonding.

Bonding materials are composed of high-density composite resin content that can be matched to your natural tooth color for a perfect-looking repair. Bonding can also be used to even out the shape of your teeth or change the color of stained teeth when whitening doesn't prove effective. Have a space between your teeth that's been bothering you? Bonding can fill in gaps too.

Think of bonding materials like sculptor's clay, to not only fix chipped teeth, but to also close minor gaps, correct the appearance of slightly crooked teeth, change the color of your teeth and cover any small, natural flaws in your smile.

Dental bonding can be the perfect answer to a host of dental imperfections. Please ask us how this smile solution may work for you – not only to fix a chipped tooth, but to create a beautiful smile that's more esthetically pleasing overall.



WHAT'S LURKING IN LIQUIDS?

No living being can survive without water. Beyond water, however, humans consume a multitude of different liquids throughout the day, many of which can have adverse effects on teeth.

As a baby, you may have been put to sleep with a bottle of milk. As an adult, please don't pass this habit on, as we now know more about the sugars that appear naturally in many foods – even milk! Putting a baby to bed with a bottle allows the milk to pool in the child's mouth as they sleep, bathing the teeth with milk – and the accompanying sugar – which mixes with the bacteria in the mouth to attack tooth enamel.

Many fruit juices are also high in sugar, so look for juice with no added sugar and consider diluting juices with water. The same goes for sports and energy drinks, which have high levels of sugar and acid.

Do you drink "diet" soda because you've heard that regular soda can include up to 11 teaspoons of sugar?

Recognize that "sugar-free" doesn't mean "home-free" – diet sodas still contain acid that can severely harm your teeth!

The sugar content in alcohol (including beer) can create an acidic breeding ground for bacteria and plaque. Even a relaxing glass of wine – no matter if it's red or white – isn't immune: the acids in wine can eat away at tooth enamel, creating rough spots that make teeth more porous and therefore vulnerable to staining.

Please ask us for suggestions on how to keep your teeth healthy and attractive while continuing to enjoy your favorite drinks!

CROWNS OR VENEERS?



DO YOU MIND THE GAP?

Besides both being entertainers, what else do singer Madonna and late-night TV host David Letterman have in common? The decision to embrace their diastema.

Diastema is the word used to describe the gap between teeth, typically the two upper front teeth. Some people don't mind the look, while others would prefer to fill in the space for a more uniform look in their smile. Depending on your needs and preferences, you may consider orthodontics, which would close the gap in one to two years, dental bonding if the space is not too large, or even dental crowns. The preferred treatment, however, is usually porcelain veneers.

Porcelain veneers will take care of more than just the gap between teeth – they will ensure that any color and/or shape irregularities are resolved, resulting in a beautiful, even smile.

If you're looking to fill the gap between your front teeth, we'll be pleased to explain the most effective options for your individual situation.

Both porcelain crowns and porcelain veneers cover existing teeth with an attractive outer shell, resulting in straight, even teeth and an attractive smile. But what's the difference between them and how do you know which one you may need? Check out these indications and feel free to give us a call to discuss any questions you may have.

A dental crown (or "cap") provides a whole new outer surface of a tooth, covering the tooth like a thimble would cover your finger. You may need one if your tooth:

- Is severely broken or worn down.
- Has had large portions destroyed by tooth decay.
- Is weak, due to excessively large fillings.
- Has had a root canal treatment, and therefore needs to be reinforced with a strong outer surface.
- Has been replaced with a dental implant.

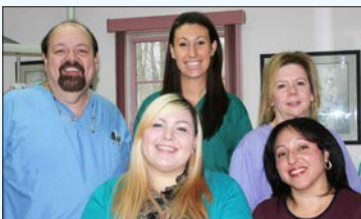
A dental veneer, on the other hand, is a thin "shell" of porcelain or ceramic that is bonded onto the

front side of a tooth (the side that shows when you smile) to cosmetically correct tooth imperfections. You may choose veneers if:

- You want to fill a gap between your front teeth.
- You need to correct minor shape problems in your teeth.
- Your teeth are stained or darkened, and regular whitening doesn't prove effective.

Both porcelain crowns and dental veneers are attractive and practical solutions to a host of different dental situations. Let's discuss which smile solution would create the beautiful smile improvement you've been looking for!

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Elisa • *Office Administrator*

Our Services Include:

- Cosmetic & General Dentistry
- Bonding & Veneers • Crowns & Bridges
- Tooth Whitening • Emergency Dental Care
- Root Canals • Oral Surgery • Extractions
- Dental Implants • Complete & Partial Dentures
- Invisalign® & ClearCorrect™ Orthodontics
- Botox® • Juvéderm® Enhancements

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