



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

## News From the Office of:



**Dr. Joseph A. DeLapa**

Welcome to the latest edition of *Dental Health News™*. This issue focuses not only on cosmetic changes you can make to ensure a bright, summery smile, but also on the relationship between your dental health and your overall health. For example, our page 2 article on soda pop contains some shocking facts on the contents of these popular beverages, while our page 3 article on harmful habits reminds you to be aware of subconscious behavior that may damage your teeth.

If you have any comments or questions about anything contained in this newsletter, please do not hesitate to give us a call.

Enjoy your newsletter, and we look forward to seeing you again soon!

All the best,

*Joseph A. DeLapa*

Dr. Joseph A. DeLapa

## Implanting Confidence in Your Smile

Ninety-two percent of respondents to a recent dental survey agreed that an attractive smile is an important social asset. However, if you're missing one or more teeth, you should be concerned about more than just their impact on your social life.

The gap left by a missing tooth can influence the positions of the other teeth. For example, when a tooth on one side of your mouth doesn't have a corresponding partner on the opposite side, it can drift out of position, change your bite and potentially lead to gum disease and pain in the jaw joint. In addition, you may find that you have difficulty eating certain foods and you may experience muscle strains and discomfort as the remaining teeth shift.

If you're missing one or more teeth and would like to minimize the risk of more dental problems due to the gap – as well as be able to smile and eat again with confidence – you may want to consider dental implants.

A dental implant involves the installation of an artificial tooth root that is placed where the missing tooth was. A new tooth is then manufactured to attach to this "anchor," resulting in the appearance and convenience of a natural tooth.

A dental implant provides an excellent option for those who want a permanent replacement tooth that looks and acts like the original tooth.

Because the implant fuses to your jawbone, it not only offers a secure base for your new tooth but also provides a look and feel that is close to that of your natural tooth. Another great advantage of a dental implant over a bridge is that if it is used to replace just one tooth, that tooth can be replaced without any of the surrounding teeth being affected.

If you have healthy gums and bones but are missing one or more teeth and are looking for a permanent, natural-looking replacement, or if you currently wear dentures that are uncomfortable or don't fit as securely as you would like, please call us to ask if you may be a suitable candidate for dental implants.

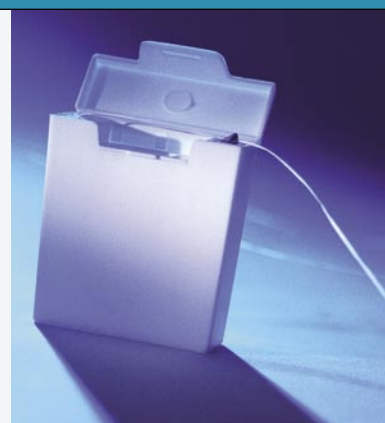


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### AN IMPORTANT DENTAL TIP FROM DR. DELAPA

Flossing is one of the most important weapons you can use to fight gum disease and bad breath, but unfortunately it's also one of the most neglected. If you don't floss between your teeth, you will only manage to properly clean about two-thirds of your tooth surface – even with the most diligent brushing. Imagine only washing two-thirds of your body while missing the remaining one-third day after day!

Please take a few minutes each night to work flossing into your routine. We would be happy to help you establish the proper flossing technique that is most comfortable for you.



# “Pop” Goes Your Dental Health!

Soda intake has increased astronomically over the past few years to the point that teenage boys and girls drink almost twice as much soda pop as milk now – reversing the consumption patterns of 20 years ago. It certainly doesn't help that vending machines offering an assortment of carbonated beverages are easily accessible in many schools these days, putting soda pop within easy reach of any student needing a sugar or caffeine boost during the day. Besides providing an influx of calories, soda replaces more nutritious foods and beverages to double the unhealthy kick on your general health. And that's not even counting the direct effect of sodas on your teeth ...

A 12-ounce can of soda contains approximately 40 grams, or about 10 teaspoons of sugar. A 20-ounce serving therefore contains about 17 teaspoons of sugar and 250 empty calories. The bacteria in your mouth feed off the sugars you put in your mouth, and while digesting the sugar, the bacteria excrete acids that dissolve the enamel of your teeth. Soda also contains phosphoric, citric, tartaric and/or carbonic acid that is linked to the breakdown of tooth enamel. As you well know, enamel protects your teeth, but if that enamel deteriorates, it can open up a whole host of dental problems ranging from sensitive teeth to dental decay.

Even if you choose “diet” soda to avoid the sugar, be aware that most sodas – regular or sugar-free – contain both phosphoric acid and citric acid which limit calcium absorption and have a direct effect on bone density –

a serious issue especially for young girls who require calcium in their formative years to avoid the danger of broken bones while they are young, and osteoporosis later in life.

Take the time for a discussion with your family about the overall health dangers of drinking soda, and try replacing it with milk and other nutritious beverages in your household. In the meantime, consider the following tips:

- 1. After drinking soda, if you can't brush your teeth immediately** then at least rinse your mouth out with water to wash away excess sugar and reduce the bacteria that create acids.
- 2. Consider drinking soda from a straw** to reduce sugar exposure and possible staining of the teeth.
- 3. Avoid sipping from a bottle all day long**, as this provides a constant supply of sugar and acids. If you must have your soda fix, try substituting the bottle (and accompanying replaceable cap) with a can of pop.
- 4. Chew sugarless gum.** Chewing gum encourages the production of saliva in the mouth, which helps wash away some of the aftermath of your beverage.

Besides the effects on your general health, remember that a poor diet, especially during the adolescent years, can lead to premature loss of tooth enamel and have devastating effects on the structure of your teeth in later years. A good reason to start a “Stop the Pop” movement in your household!



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## The History of Dentistry: The Egyptian Connection

The Egyptians were among the first to recognize dentistry as a specialty. Historic discoveries from 2900 BC include a skull showing two holes drilled through the bone, presumably to drain an abscessed tooth. Scientists have also concluded that Egyptians were performing dental implants way back then – by hammering seashells into the jaw to replace teeth.

Looking back at the ancient origins of dental treatments, it's amazing to think that Novocain, a painkiller we take for granted, wasn't even introduced to dental offices until 1907!



# Harmful Habits

**Being aware of your bad dental habits is the first step to a healthy dental future. Please feel free to talk to us about solutions for your particular unhealthy dental habit.**



People often unconsciously engage in habits that, over the years, can result in harm to their teeth and gums. Starting as children, thumb sucking is a common habit that may result in long-term dental repercussions. The pressure of the thumb on the teeth and roof of the mouth may force the child's teeth out of position and affect the shape of the jaw. Beyond age 6, problems ranging from protruding teeth to speech defects may form due to changes in tooth and bone structure.

When children start school, they may get into the habit of chewing on the ends of pencils and pens, another habit that can affect proper development of teeth and could even chip teeth depending on the pressure on the writing instrument. Biting into and chewing on ice is another common practice that puts a tremendous amount of bite stress on the teeth. Biting into ice cubes can lead to tooth pain, cracking, fractures and in some cases even broken teeth.

Sometimes we need to be reminded that our teeth were made for chewing food ... not for opening things or use as all-around backup tools! Take a few extra minutes to hunt for a pair of scissors or whatever tool you need before substituting your teeth for the job.

In some cases, we don't even need to put anything in our mouths in order to harm our teeth – excessive grinding of our teeth while we sleep is a subconscious habit that many people engage in as a reaction to emotional stress. Chronic grinding can lead to a multitude of tooth, gum and jaw problems, often causing headaches as well. Once we identify that you do grind your teeth, we can provide you with a solution that will limit the

## A Sore Subject



Canker sores and cold sores are common yet annoying mouth irritations that are often confused with one another.

Cold sores, often called fever blisters, are highly contagious lip sores initially caused by the herpes simplex virus. The virus remains in the body to produce future outbreaks as a reaction to stress, illness, injury or sunlight. The first sign of a cold sore is usually a tingling sensation around the mouth, followed by painful, fluid-filled blisters on the lips and mouth. The blisters typically burst and scab over, usually healing in about a week.

Canker sores appear not on the lips but rather inside the mouth, presenting as small ulcers with a white or gray base and a red border. Unlike cold sores, they are not contagious and their exact cause is not known. Cankers can be

triggered by fatigue, stress, allergies or intestinal problems in some people. If you bite or cut your cheek or tongue, or burn the inside of your mouth with hot food, you could also increase the likelihood of developing a canker sore. Some foods could trigger canker sores in certain cases – so make sure you note what you've eaten each time you suffer an outbreak of canker sores to see if there's a pattern.

Most canker sores will heal on their own after a week or two, and you can help the process along by avoiding hot, spicy or acidic foods in the meantime.

If your cold sores or canker sores do not heal, or seem to be getting worse after about a week, please call our office for suggestions that may ease your discomfort and speed up your recovery.

## So, What's New?

Your regular office visits allow us to check for the usual dental concerns, but we can only check what we can see. What we need to ensure a total dental checkup is to hear what's new with you. This includes any change to your general health, any new medication you are taking or any pain or discomfort in your mouth that doesn't have an obvious cause. All of this will allow us to investigate the problem thoroughly, perhaps referring you to a specialist if need be.

The next time you're in for your regular checkup, update us on "what's new" with you!



## Bonding With Your Dentist

Dental bonding is an effective method for repairing chipped, cracked or discolored teeth. Bonding can even out and fill in gaps between teeth and can also be used as an alternative to silver amalgam fillings.

Bonding materials are used somewhat like sculptor's clay in that composites can close up minor gaps, correct the appearance of crooked teeth, change the color of your teeth and basically cover any natural flaws in your smile.

The bonding procedure starts with the selection of a composite resin (bonding material) that matches the color of your teeth. We'll lightly sand

your teeth and apply a liquid to help the bonding material adhere to the teeth. We'll apply the composite resin, smooth it into the desired shape and then harden it with a high intensity light. As a final step, we'll sculpt and polish the tooth to make it blend in with your surrounding teeth to give you a "naturally" beautiful smile!

Bonding is a good solution to many dental imperfections, from restoring decayed teeth to changing the color or shape of your teeth to result in a more aesthetically pleasing appearance. Please ask us how this smile solution may work for you.



## Do I Need My Teeth Whitened?

Take a minute to flash yourself a nice big smile in the mirror. Now have a closer look at your teeth and ask yourself:

- Are my teeth yellow, dull, dark or stained?
- Are they shaded unevenly?
- Do I have any crowns and/ or old dental work that don't match my natural teeth any more?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, you should know just how easy it is to solve these very common imperfections. Whether your tooth discoloration is due to aging, coffee, red wine, staining fruits or any of a number of other everyday causes, you should know that what may have taken years to discolor can be reversed with a minimum of time and effort on your part.

Call us today to discuss the easy and convenient tooth whitening options available to you at our office.

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#### Office Team:

Christine *Office Manager/Dental Assistant*  
Iria *Office Administrator*  
Amy, Roseanne *Hygienists*  
Elisa *Office Assistant*

#### Our Services Include:

- Family Dentistry • Emergency Dental Care
- Bad Breath Advice & Treatment • Tooth Whitening
- Cosmetic Dentistry • Denture Fittings • Dental Implants
- Bonding, Veneers, Crowns, Bridges • Oral Surgery
- Invisalign® Orthodontic Treatment

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### DR. JOSEPH A. DELAPA



Dr. DeLapa & Team

## A reminder of your next appointment with Dr. DeLapa.

If you haven't already booked a time for your next appointment, please call us today to reserve the most convenient time for you.

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