



## News From the Office of:



**Dr. Joseph A. DeLapa**

Happy New Year to you and your family! Our first newsletter of 2006 aims to give you good dental advice to carry you through this new year – from being aware of bad dental habits, to how to avoid gum disease and how to make the best choices for your dental health to make your smile shine brighter than ever before.

Have a look at our dental resolutions on page 4 and promise yourself that you'll make your dental health a priority this year. We look forward to seeing you again soon!

All the best,

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

Dr. Joseph A. DeLapa

## Drugstores vs. Dentists: The “White” Choice for You

**If you've decided that you'd like to brighten and whiten your smile, you have two choices – go to the drugstore and buy an off-the-shelf product, or come to us for dentist-supervised treatment. What's the best choice for you?**



An independent study conducted on behalf of the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry discovered that discolored, yellow or stained teeth were the number one turnoff in an unattractive smile. Factor in the statistic that shows that 50% of us are not satisfied with the appearance of our own smiles, and it's not surprising to learn that North Americans are turning to cosmetic dentistry in droves. In fact, the popularity of teeth whitening alone has increased by over 300% in the past five years!

You have no doubt noticed the onslaught of advertising for off-the-shelf teeth whitening products. While what they promise sounds like a less expensive version of what dentists offer, be aware that teeth whitening is a procedure utilizing chemicals in your mouth, and, as such, is best conducted under the supervision of a dental professional.

Here are two important advantages of using a dentist-supervised whitening program:

### **1. Properly-Fitted Mouth Trays**

Chances are that the “one size fits all” whitening tray included in your

off-the-shelf drugstore whitening kit likely won't be an exact fit for your mouth. The tray may leak the whitening gel in your mouth, resulting in gum irritation and an ineffective result. Our office custom-fits your tray to ensure maximum comfort, safety and whitening effectiveness.

### **2. Safe, Comfortable, Customized Treatments**

A common complaint among drugstore whitening product consumers is that the teeth-whitening gel causes some level of discomfort. At our office, we adjust the strength of our treatment to provide you with the results you're looking for, with the highest degree of comfort.

Even whitening strips, which seem like an easy solution, often don't whiten teeth evenly, and can miss some areas of your teeth completely.

To summarize, you'll simply never get professional results with a retail product. Allow us to explain our tooth-whitening process to you, and show you how your teeth can be safely and effectively whitened with our professional, supervised program.



# Everyday Harmful Dental Habits



We all have oral behavioral patterns, from eating habits to nervous actions that we need to be aware of in order to give our mouth the best chance at long-term health.

People often unconsciously engage in habits that can, over the years, result in harm to their teeth and gums. For children, thumb sucking is a common habit that can result in long-term dental repercussions. The pressure of the thumb on the teeth and roof of the mouth may force a 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.

Teenagers and young adults may suffer from eating disorders, such as bulimia nervosa (secret binge eating followed by self-induced vomiting), which can severely erode tooth enamel. Anorexia nervosa is another eating disorder where people simply eat as little as possible in their quest to become thinner, while in the process depriving themselves of the vitamins and nutrients they need for good oral and overall health.

People who snack constantly throughout the day are at the other spectrum of the scale,



as their increased risk of tooth decay comes from the constant supply of food that feeds the plaque that forms on teeth, producing acids that then attack tooth enamel and contribute to tooth decay.

Some people find themselves reacting to daily stresses by grinding their teeth at night. 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 custom-made night guard that will limit the potential for permanent damage.

Tobacco use is, of course, a whole other topic, as smokers are not only at an increased risk for oral cancer, but also for periodontal disease. This is confirmed by research that shows that smokers are much more likely to lose their teeth than non-smokers. Tobacco users are also prone to:

- Bad breath      ■ Stained teeth
- Loss of taste      ■ Facial wrinkling      ■ Mouth sores
- Less success with periodontal treatments and dental implants

And 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 an extra few minutes to hunt for a pair of scissors or whatever tool you need before substituting your teeth for the job. 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.

**Being aware of your bad dental habits is the first step to a healthy dental future. Please feel free to talk to us about how we may be able to help you solve your particular unhealthy dental habit.**



# A Simple Snoring Solution



**You may wonder why you're reading about snoring in a dental newsletter, but the fact is that as dental professionals, we not only take care of your teeth and gums, we're also here to help you get a good night's sleep!**

If you snore, or cohabitate with someone who does, you should know that snoring can be triggered by a number of different factors, from enlarged tonsils or adenoids, to your diet, health, lifestyle, age, weight, environment and other seemingly unrelated factors.

While it's the subject of many jokes, it can also be a serious problem. Snoring can not only interrupt your bed partner's sleep (which is no laughing matter to him or her), it is also associated with sleep apnea and cardiovascular problems such as high blood pressure, which can lead to a stroke.

Snoring is produced when the muscles and soft tissues in the throat and mouth relax, making your airway smaller. The decrease in airway space increases the velocity of air

flowing through the airway during breathing, which causes vibrations in the soft tissues of the mouth and throat, producing the "snoring" sound.

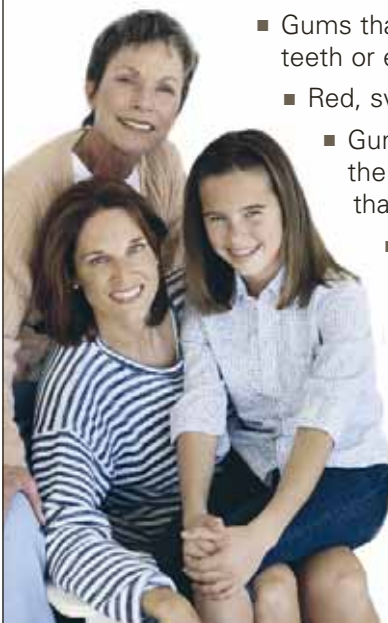
If you're a snorer or sleep with someone who is, you may be interested in talking to us about a dental appliance that can help keep the noise down. It's a simple mouthpiece that prevents the lower jaw from falling back and/or your tongue from dropping back towards the back of your throat while you're sleeping, thereby helping to keep your airway open.

You owe it to yourself, and partner too, to ask us about a custom-made snoring appliance that can provide a peaceful solution to your noisy nights.

## Gum Disease: How to Spot It/How to Avoid It

**Gum disease (or "periodontal disease") is a common bacterial infection of the tissues surrounding the teeth. If this infection is unattended, the gums and bone that support the teeth deteriorate, leading to tooth loss.**

**It's important to be aware of what gum disease looks like. Please call us immediately if you notice the following signs of gum disease:**



- Gums that bleed when you brush your teeth or eat hard foods.
- Red, swollen or tender gums.
- Gums that have pulled away from the teeth, or teeth that look longer than before.
- Pus between your teeth and gums.
- New spaces between your teeth.
- Persistent bad breath.
- A change in the way your teeth or partial dentures fit together when you bite.

In its early stages, gum disease can be controlled with professional scaling and tooth planing procedures. In order to avoid it

altogether, you'll want to follow these simple tips to avoid gum disease:

- Maintain regular appointments at your dentist to ensure professional teeth cleanings.
- Take the recommended 3 to 5 minutes each time you brush to properly clean all your tooth surfaces.
- Floss once a day to reach the 35% of the tooth surfaces that brushing alone can miss.
- Avoid tobacco. Tobacco users are at a higher risk of developing periodontal disease than non-users.
- Maintain a healthy diet. Poor nutrition can worsen the condition of your gums.

These simple tips can help keep your gums healthy, and give you the best chance of avoiding this most preventable disease.





## New Year's (Dental) Resolutions!

Now that the holiday season has wound down, you may finally have some time to develop those photographs you took with friends and family over the past few weeks. If you notice that your "Say Cheese!" smile isn't as straight or white as it should be, you may want to look at some of your options for a brighter smile this year.

Here are some dental resolutions to consider.

### My Top Four Dental Resolutions for 2006:

1. I will brush my teeth at least twice a day for at least 3 minutes each time, no matter how tired or how rushed I am. I will also floss between my teeth every day to remove the stuff that my toothbrush can't reach.
2. I will pay more attention to food, drinks and tobacco that may stain my teeth. If my teeth are already stained, I will ask my dentist about teeth whitening options.
3. I will ask my dentist about how veneers can improve my smile by fixing gaps, chips or slightly uneven teeth in just a couple of visits.
4. I will consider a dental implant to replace my missing tooth or teeth, so that I won't have to worry about the gap ever again!

**There's no better time than the present to start working toward a new year of healthy, bright smiles!**



## Time to Shape Up!

**As your dentist, we feel we owe it to you to tell you that we can help you shape up ... your gums and teeth!**

Sometimes your gums and teeth may be almost perfect, but their shape may cast an illusion that they're not. For example, you may have an excess of gum on your front teeth, making them look short. Or perhaps your gums are uneven, making your teeth look like they're different lengths. You may be surprised to know that a simple gum procedure can lengthen or even out your gums, uncovering your even smile.

If your teeth are slightly crooked, chipped, cracked or overlapping, we can smooth them into shape, using a simple and economical in-office procedure known as tooth contouring. It involves contouring your teeth into an esthetically pleasing shape, filling them in with bonding materials, if necessary, and then smoothing and polishing them into an improved new smile.

Ask us to explain more about these simple, yet effective smile solutions.

## Joseph A. DeLapa, D.D.S.



**Chris, Dr. DeLapa, Amy, Sherie & Iria**

**363 Smith Ridge Road  
South Salem, NY 10590**

**Phone:** (914) 533-6166  
**Email:** drdelapa@drdelapa.com  
**Website:** www.drdelapa.com

### Office Hours:

Tues., Thurs.: 12 p.m. - 8 p.m.  
Wed., Fri.: 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.  
Sat.: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

### Office Team:

Christine *Office Manager/Dental Assistant*  
Iria, Sherie *Office Administrators*  
Amy, Jeanne *Hygienists*  
Elisa *Office Assistant*

### Our Services Include:

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