



# Dental Health News™

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

## News From the Office of:



**Dr. Joseph A. DeLapa**

Welcome to the latest issue of our newsletter.

We've included some interesting articles not only about tooth-related issues, but also on some health concerns that may start in the mouth. Please feel free to pass it along to any friends or family members who may find it interesting too.

Summer is a great time to catch up on dental appointments that you and your family may not have had time to schedule during the other busy seasons, so if you or anyone in your household needs an appointment, just give us a call, and we'll schedule a time that's convenient for you.

We look forward to seeing you again soon!

All the best,

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

Dr. Joseph A. DeLapa

## Summer Bright, Summer White



**Summer weather means bright, white t-shirts and smiles to match. If your smile isn't as bright and sparkling as you'd like, why not celebrate summer by treating yourself to easy and effective tooth whitening at our office!**

Whiter teeth are associated with beauty and a healthier lifestyle. People who are confident in their smiles tend to smile more often and are less self-conscious. In addition, having a whiter smile to focus on tends to minimize the appearance of facial wrinkles, giving the impression of a more youthful and energetic appearance.

A person's natural tooth color is often an indicator of their age, as teeth tend to darken over time. Needless to say, whiter teeth are therefore associated with a younger age. Your teeth can also be stained from years of exposure to medications, coffee, tea, colas, cigarettes and staining foods.

Not all of your teeth are the same natural color. In most cases the eyeteeth tend to be darker than the others, the front teeth are typically the whitest, and molars tend to be a shade between the two. The goal for everyone is to achieve their

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individual optimum whiteness while still looking natural.

Whiter teeth have been accredited with giving people confidence, increasing their self-esteem and empowering them with a more positive attitude. Drugstore whitening products don't tend to be as safe and effective as dentist-issued programs. Whitening toothpastes, which use abrasive components, don't help to make a significant difference to overall tooth color, since their job is primarily to remove stains. Professional whitening administered by a dental expert is therefore your best bet when it comes to ensuring satisfying results.

Patients who have thought about whitening their teeth are always so pleased with the results that their only regret is that they didn't do it earlier. Why not call us today and treat yourself to the bright, white smile of your dreams, and give yourself one more thing to smile about!



# Sweet, Sweet Summertime

**Summertime and soft drinks seem to go together so effortlessly that we don't stop to think about the amount of sugar that we're ingesting. In fact, soda pop is our nation's biggest source of refined sugar, and the effect on your teeth from these drinks can be appalling.**

The sugar in soft drinks combines with bacteria in the mouth to form acid. This acid, in addition to the acid already present in the drink, attacks teeth. A new acid attack starts with every sip.

The bacteria inside people's mouths feed off sugar, and when the bacteria digest the sugar, they secrete acid onto the tooth's surface, the enamel. Plaque on the enamel traps the acid on the tooth and helps to amplify the acid's effects, keeping it trapped against the tooth rather than allowing it to be washed away by saliva. Too much acid leads to cavities in the enamel. If the acid gets past the protective layer of enamel, it then eats away at the dentin layer inside your tooth, which can require even more extensive dental repairs.

So the solution to tooth decay from excess sugar comes down to prevention, either by not consuming the offending sugars in the first place or, failing that, by cutting down on the consumption, and brushing and flossing the acids away before they have a chance to damage the teeth. Regular professional cleanings by your dentist will ensure that plaque is removed from your teeth, and as such lessen the chances that acid is trapped on your teeth.

Estimates vary as to what the average daily consumption of sugar is. Some estimates show an average North American consumption rate of 20 added teaspoons of sugar a day. Others estimate that teenage boys consume 34 teaspoons of sugar a day, 44% of which comes from soft drinks, while teenage girls consume 24 teaspoons of sugar, 40% from soft drinks. (Note that "sugar" includes hidden sugars, such as sucrose, high fructose corn syrup, dextrose, glucose, honey and molasses.) Whichever statistics you read, the bottom line is the same ... we are battering our bodies with an overload of sugar!

Even without the sugar and empty calories of regular soda pop, diet or "sugar-free" soft drinks still contain acid that can harm your teeth, as do sweetened fruit and sport drinks.



Some smart tooth tips, in addition to cutting down on your consumption of soft drinks and other sugar-laden foods and beverages, include:

- Don't sip on sugary drinks for an extended period of time, and brush your teeth, or at least rinse with water, when you're finished.
- Drink through a straw in order to keep sugar away from your teeth.
- Floss daily and brush with a fluoride toothpaste. Maintain regular appointments with your dentist for professional tooth-cleanings.

# The Fight Against Oral Cancer

Yet another good reason to maintain regular dental examinations.

According to the Oral Cancer Foundation, oral cancer – which includes mouth cancer, tongue cancer and throat cancer – is a serious worldwide concern, with approximately 300,000 new cases being diagnosed annually.



While it is estimated that here in North America, a person dies from oral cancer every hour of every day, it is also important to know that when found early, oral cancers have an 80 to 90% cure rate. Unfortunately, the majority of cases are discovered as late stage cancers, which accounts for the very high death rate.

One of the real dangers of oral cancer is that, in its early stages, it can easily go unnoticed. You may not feel anything at all, or if you do notice a small red or white lump in your mouth you might be tempted to dismiss it as a cold sore or a minor irritation like a bite on the inside of your cheek. However, early diagnosis is critical to long-term survival, so if you have any doubts about suspicious spots or sores on your lips, tongue or anywhere in

your mouth, please make sure that you call us for an appointment so we can examine it more closely. We will carefully inspect your tongue, the floor and roof of your mouth and also feel the lymph nodes in your neck area for any abnormalities. If we detect anything unusual, we will conduct further testing to ensure that you receive the appropriate care and follow-up.

You can lower your risk of oral cancer by avoiding tobacco products in any form, avoiding alcohol or drinking only in moderation, and using a lip balm that contains sunscreen to protect your lips from harmful UV rays.

Please do not hesitate to call us if you have any questions or concerns about oral cancer.



## My Tooth's Knocked Out ... Now What?

**Summer camp activities, participation in outdoor sports and sometimes just bad luck can result in a dental accident. However, even if a permanent tooth is knocked right out, don't despair, as there's still a chance the tooth can be saved.**

The first thing to do is find the tooth and, holding it by the crown, gently rinse off the root of the tooth with clean water. Do not scrub it or remove any attached tissue fragments. Gently place the tooth back in its socket and have the patient bite down softly to keep it in place. If the tooth belongs to a child or if the patient is not in the position to keep the tooth safely in his or her mouth, put the tooth in a cup of milk. Call our office immediately, or get to an emergency dental clinic as quickly as possible in order to have the best chance of saving the tooth.

In some cases we can save the tooth; in other cases it just doesn't work, and we need to discuss options for a replacement

tooth. Whether it's a partial denture, bridge or a dental implant you choose, the important thing is to fill the gap left by the missing tooth as quickly as possible. The reason is that a missing tooth leaves a gap in your mouth (which is unattractive, at best) and room for surrounding teeth to drift out of position. This shifting can change your bite, potentially leading to cavities, gum disease and bite problems that could cause pain in your jaw. A replacement tooth will keep your other teeth in line and help you avoid orthodontic treatment down the road.

Of course the best treatment is prevention, so ask us about custom mouthguards to help protect your active lifestyle.

## The Diastema Debate

What do the singer Madonna, the late-night TV host David Letterman and MAD Magazine's Alfred E. Neuman have in common? The decision to embrace their diastema, that's what.

## Better Than a "Silver Lining"!

There's nothing better than a hearty, head-back, belly-shaking laugh to brighten up your day, so when that knee-slapper presents itself, make sure you're not worried about your mouthful of unattractive metal fillings to tarnish the moment.

Previously, metal fillings were the only option for dentists, who have filled and restored teeth with materials made of mercury and silver for over 100 years. While effective enough, these metal fillings have always simply done their job, without any regard for visual appeal.

Luckily, modern technology has created another option that allows filling or fixing teeth with composite resins – natural-looking white materials that are tinted to blend in with your teeth. Composite resins are also now stronger than when they were first invented, bonding to teeth to support the tooth structure, which helps prevent breakage.

Ask us how easy it is to bring a fresh, young look back into your smile by replacing your existing metal fillings with natural-looking composites.

Diastema is the word used to describe the gap between the top 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 have a few options:

1. **Braces** will move your teeth around and close the spaces over a period of anywhere from one to four years, depending on the case.
2. **Dental Bonding** can be placed on the two teeth that lie on each side of the gap to reduce the gap's overall width.
3. **Crowns** are new outside surfaces for your teeth that cover your existing teeth the way a thimble covers your finger. These "caps" are designed to straighten the look of your smile, and correct the spacing between your teeth.
4. **Porcelain veneers** are thin shells of porcelain that are bonded onto the front side of your existing teeth to fill in the gaps and straighten out any imperfections.

If you're looking to fill the gap between your front teeth, we'll be pleased to explain the options that would serve your individual situation best.

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



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### Office Team:

Christine *Office Manager/Dental Assistant*  
Iria, Sherie *Office Administrators*  
Amy *Hygienist*

### Our Services Include:

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