



News From the Office of:



Dr. Joseph A. DeLapa

Welcome to our latest newsletter, which we've created especially for you, our valued patients and your families.

In this season of "spring cleaning," we encourage you to remember your dental cleanings too. Good dental health begins with clean gums and teeth, and regular checkups to your whole mouth. If you haven't already scheduled your next dental visit, please call us today!

If you're happy with your dental experience in our office, we would be grateful if you could tell your friends and family about us. In fact, why not pass this newsletter along so that they can get an idea of what we're all about.

Thanks to all our patients who have referred new patients our way. We consider your referrals the highest form of flattery!

All the best,

Joseph A. DeLapa, D.D.S.

Dr. Joseph A. DeLapa

Here Comes the Bride, Radiant in White!

Spring hails the beginning of the wedding season. Whether you're a bride who wants to ensure that her smile complements - not clashes with - her beautiful white dress, a wedding party participant who needs a photo-ready smile, or an honored guest of the wedding, you'll want to consider teeth whitening for all the smiles that are part and parcel of the happy occasion.

Give yourself enough time before the special event to ensure that the whitening procedure is completed to your satisfaction. Depending on your needs and budget, teeth whitening can be completed over a number of treatments, or in as little as one hour. However, before you make that kind of decision, be sure to follow the important steps below.

1. Your first stop should be to our office, to make sure that you have a healthy mouth and gums, and are a good candidate for the bleaching process;
2. Step 2 involves a discussion between the two of us on your tooth whitening expectations. While whitening works in most cases, the level of success depends on what you're starting off with. For example, yellowish-hued teeth will probably bleach well, brownish-colored teeth not as well, and grayish-hued teeth less well.

Once we determine that whitening will work for you, we can talk about the method that would suit you best. The most important thing to remember is that a professional teeth-whitening program issued and supervised by your dentist uses a program custom-made to your needs, and is your best bet for safe treatment and long-lasting, professional results. Choose immediate results with in-office whitening, or consider the more economical at-home whitening program. With either program, we will monitor your teeth whitening process each step of the way, ensuring that it is proceeding safely while watching for any sensitivity to your teeth or gums.

Take the first step to whiter, brighter teeth by discussing all of your options with us. We'll make sure that your smile is radiant on your special day and admired in photos for generations to come.



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DRUGS AND DENTISTRY

As you know, our office keeps a file on your dental history. In that file is also any background information you've shared with us about any medical conditions you have or any medications you may be taking. It's important that you keep us updated on any changes to this information, in order for us to treat your dental needs safely and appropriately.



In some cases, we can recognize the signs of certain drugs by simply looking at your teeth. For example, Tetracycline, a powerful antibiotic, was prescribed widely prior to 1980, and pregnant women sometimes passed the drug onto their unborn children, resulting in permanent dark and deep gray or brown stains on their children's teeth. During the same time period many children were given the drug directly, in some cases resulting in the same stains.

Another example relates to asthma sufferers, who should be aware that asthma medications can lead to dry mouth, which can increase your chance of developing dental decay, in addition to possible oral fungal infections. Even cough syrup can affect the teeth with its high concentration of sugar.

Sometimes drugs can affect your teeth not so much because of what they contain, but by how they are consumed. For example, the Journal of the American Dental Association published a case study showing examples of severe hard and soft tissue damage and enamel erosion attributed to the chewing, instead of swallowing, of multiple aspirin tablets on a long-term basis.

An alarming trend in today's society is the increasing use of methamphetamine (also known as meth, crank, crystal and speed), a powerful and addictive drug that results in the severe deterioration of a user's teeth in a short period of time. According to the 2005 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, an estimated 10.4 million Americans aged 12 or older used methamphetamine at least once in their lifetimes for non-medical reasons, while a 2004 Canadian Addictions Survey showed that 0.8% of Canadians reported using "speed" (an informal term that covers all amphetamines, including methamphetamine) at least once in the previous 12 months. Along with the many other physiological implications of methamphetamine, dentists are noticing a particular phenomenon that's becoming known as "meth mouth." According to the American Dental Association, meth mouth is characterized by rampant tooth decay and teeth that are described by methamphetamine users as blackened, stained, rotting, crumbling or falling apart.

In addition to understanding which drugs you are on, it's important that we know about your medical conditions too, as people with certain medical conditions may require special consideration in the dental chair. For example, patients with low blood pressure may require a more upright positioning in the dental chair. Even a high consumption of herbal teas can lower blood pressure and put people at risk of fainting in the dental chair, so make sure that you keep us advised of any herbal remedies or alternative medicines you may be taking too, as most people don't realize that multivitamins, ginseng tablets and herbal teas are also considered drugs.

If you've had heart or joint replacement surgery, or are immunosuppressed due to illness, radiation treatment or a drug you are taking, please let us know. Sometimes we need to prescribe antibiotics before we even start dental work, in order to avoid possible infection or complications during your dental procedure.



IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A HEALTHY SMILE, IT'S IMPORTANT TO START BY UNDERSTANDING WHAT YOUR TEETH ARE COMPRISED OF.

The Calcium Connection

Teeth, like bones, are calcified tissues. Teeth begin to form in the first few months of fetal life and the mineralization process continues into late adolescence. An adequate intake of calcium is essential for proper development of tooth structures and, as such, it is recommended that children up to age 11 consume 700 to 900 mg of calcium per day, while pre-teens and teenagers require between 1,000 to 1,200 mg of calcium or more per day to keep up with the growth spurts common to this age group.

Calcium consumption is important at all stages of life. When adults don't get enough calcium in their diet, their body is forced to borrow what it needs from their bones. Continued

withdrawals of calcium from the "bone bank" can lead to osteoporosis, or brittle bones. In fact, the first signs of osteoporosis are sometimes discovered by dentists, because as the jawbone is surrendering calcium for needs elsewhere in your body, your jawbone will weaken and your teeth will loosen, creating gaps where bacteria can invade.

Another important incentive for maintaining adequate calcium consumption is to ward off periodontal (gum) disease. A study published in the Journal of Periodontology stated that people who consumed enough calcium had significantly lower rates of periodontal disease.

As an adult, you may not always recognize the need for at least three servings of calcium each day. Keep in mind that calcium comes from a number of sources, not just milk, yogurt and cheese. Look for fortified food products such as certain breakfast cereals, fortified orange juice, soy products, almonds, salmon with bones and some dark green vegetables such as broccoli. Include your favorites in your daily food choices, or add a calcium supplement to your diet to encourage healthy bones, teeth and gums.



WINNING SMILES FOR ATHLETES

Every athlete, whether a professional or of the weekend warrior variety, wants to be the very best he or she can be. However, as your dentist, I'd like to make sure that you don't forget about your teeth in your quest for the win, and that's why I urge you to give the same attention to your mouth as you would to your game strategy.

First of all, any sport or recreational activity that might pose a risk of injury to the mouth calls for a properly fitted mouthguard. This important piece of athletic equipment can cushion a blow that might otherwise cause broken teeth, injuries to the lips, tongue, face or jaw. Mouthguards are also believed to aid in reducing the severity and incidence of concussions. A custom-fitted mouthguard is an essential smile saver.

Many athletes enjoy a sports drink during or after a strenuous workout. While there are benefits to sports drinks for those who have worked up a good sweat, be aware that extended exposure of these drinks on your teeth may cause damage to the teeth's enamel. If you include sports drinks in your workout, make sure you follow these simple dental health tips:

1. Don't sip your sports drink throughout your workout or game. Drinking your beverage over an extended time allows prolonged exposure of your teeth to the acids in your drink. You're better off sipping water during your workout, leaving the sports drink to be consumed at halftime or the end of the game.
2. Remember to remove your mouthguard while you drink, to minimize the residual effect of acid from the sports drink hanging around in the mouth.
3. Rinse your mouth thoroughly after finishing your sports drink. Do not brush your teeth immediately after drinking these beverages, as you may end up working the acids right into your enamel.

Make sure that your smile is as healthy as your sports spirit by paying attention to the dental tips above.



Even Out Your Smile!

The quest for an improved smile is sometimes as simple as evening out your gumline through crown lengthening or gum lifts. This works for people whose smile is more gums than teeth, or for those who have an uneven gumline that results in an irregular look to teeth that are actually straight and even.

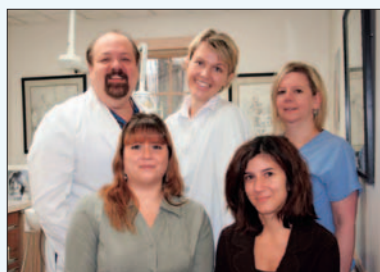
Are you a good candidate for crown lengthening? If you have an excess of gum, or if your gums never completely receded after childhood, the technique can significantly improve your smile.

The procedure, which has been carried out for decades to treat gum disease but only in the last few years been offered as a cosmetic dentistry option, involves contouring gum tissue and/or bone to lengthen the look of teeth, and beautify gummy smiles. Patients are impressed as to how easy it is to even out their gumline, making their teeth look more even and much more attractive. Add porcelain veneers to brighten the smile and even out any chips or unevenness in the front teeth, and you'll really have something to smile about! In fact, the vast majority of gum lifts are done in conjunction with porcelain veneers.

If you'd like to find out more about this smile option, please don't hesitate to ask us for more details.



Joseph A. DeLapa, D.D.S.



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Sat.: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Office Team:

Christine *Office Manager/Dental Assistant*
Sherie, Mirela *Office Administrators*
Roseann, Agnieszka *Hygienists*

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

The Last Word on: **Smile Improvements**

Today's dental patients are more aware of cosmetic dentistry than ever before. Give the credit to shows like "Extreme Makeover," the perfect smiles seen on TV personalities and movie stars or to the increased attention being given to the ease and success of cosmetic procedures in the general media today, but many patients coming in to our office know exactly what type of smile improvement they'd like.

What's on the general public's cosmetic dentistry wish list? According to a survey conducted by the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry, teeth whitening tops the list, with 29 percent of patients requesting it. Some patients are also looking for more prominent teeth in order to provide increased lip support, creating the look of fuller lips.

If you're considering a smile improvement, simply give us a call and we will be happy to explain the many cosmetic dentistry options we provide, and which ones would work best for your special smile.