



# 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're pleased to have this opportunity to say hello, and to provide dental updates you and your family may find helpful.

Our objective is to remind you of the importance of regular, consistent dental care to preserve your optimum oral health. Of course, a whiter, brighter smile is always an attractive goal for you too, so when you call to schedule your continuing care appointment, make sure to ask us about the latest, most effective cosmetic options.

Enjoy this newsletter, and please pass it on to a friend or family member who may enjoy reading up on the latest dental health news.

We look forward to seeing you soon!

All the best,

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

Dr. Joseph A. DeLapa

## THE FASTEST WAY TO A BRIGHTER DAY!

Whether you're planning a spring or summer wedding, anticipating a busy social schedule or simply want to brighten your look, there's no quicker, easier boost to your appearance (and to your confidence!) than whitening your teeth.



While most of us recognize that the years of drinking coffee, red wine or other staining drinks and foods, partnered with using tobacco in some cases and enhanced by the simple aging process, has led to the discoloration of our teeth, it's difficult to know how best to bring them back to their former brightness. The range of teeth whitening products on the market today – from toothpastes to whitening strips to drugstore whitening kits – can make a consumer's head spin.

Before starting any kind of whitening program, we strongly suggest you talk to us. The whitening products available through retail outlets may all promise the same results as what we offer, but in most cases you won't get the results you're looking for through a retail product, and in some cases might expose yourself to unnecessary discomfort or even a risk to your gums, teeth or overall health. Note that some companies produce both a retail version of their whitening product and a professional

version that's available only through dental offices. The packaging may look similar, but the results can vary significantly.

We offer in-office, time-effective whitening options or more economical take-home whitening systems that are dentist-approved for your optimum comfort and safety. Whitening trays are custom-fitted to your mouth, ensuring that any whitening gels stay where they should, instead of leaking into your mouth like the one-size-fits-all drugstore versions.

The next time you have a conversation with someone new, make a point of recognizing what you notice about them first. If you're like most people, you will automatically be drawn to people with a healthy, beautiful smile. You'll notice that a big part of that smile is the color of their teeth.

If you or someone you know has questions on teeth whitening, please call us. We'd be happy to explain how you can get the smile of your dreams, safely and effectively!



# SENSITIVE ISSUES

People who have teeth that are sensitive to heat or cold, sweet or sour foods or drinks, or even breathing in cold air, can experience anything from a mild twinge of discomfort to a full-blown jolt of pain when their teeth are exposed to the irritant. What are some of the causes of sensitive teeth?

When a patient complains of pain from a sensitive tooth, we will first check to see if you have any decayed or fractured teeth. If this type of damage isn't apparent, the next step is a process of elimination, as teeth can feel sensitive for a number of different reasons, including:

**RECEDING GUMS.** The visible part of our teeth is covered by a hard layer of enamel, which maintains the tooth structure and shape, while protecting the softer dentine inside. When gums recede (because you're using a hard toothbrush and brushing too hard, because of gum disease, or even because of simple aging), the absence of gum over your tooth roots, which are not covered by the protective enamel, exposes the tiny dentinal channels leading to the tooth's nerve center (pulp). If you think of your gums as a protective blanket for the roots of your teeth, you can appreciate the job your gums do to keep those roots covered. When the "blanket" is absent, the exposed roots can be irritated, which travels into the nerves in the tooth, causing discomfort.

**A CRACKED TOOTH OR FILLING.** A crack in the tooth may run from the biting surface right down to the root. Extreme temperatures tend to trigger pain. A cracked tooth can be difficult to diagnose both visually and by X ray, but needs to be identified as it can eventually lead to a tooth abscess if not taken care of.

**TOOTH GRINDING.** Many people clench and grind their teeth unknowingly, often while they're asleep. This can cause their tooth enamel to eventually wear away, leading to sensitivity.

**ENAMEL EROSION.** Repeated exposure to acidic foods and drinks can eventually wear away the protective tooth

enamel. For example, soft drinks and energy drinks can damage tooth enamel over time by dissolving the mineral structure of the teeth. If you do indulge in soft drinks or energy drinks, keep these tips in mind:

- Use a straw, positioned at the back of the mouth, to help the liquid bypass the front teeth and shorten the exposure of the drink to your tooth enamel.
- Rinse your mouth out with water after drinking an acidic beverage. Do not brush your teeth for 20 minutes after consumption so as not to destroy the weakened enamel.
- Try and consume acidic foods and drinks in one sitting, as opposed to nibbling and sipping throughout the day, to minimize the amount of time the teeth are exposed to the acids.

**TOOTH WHITENING.** Temporary tooth sensitivity due to whitening is common. It's important for a dental professional to prescribe the proper course of whitening. Drugstore whitening kits do not provide the ideal combination of fitted whitening tray, percentage of whitening solution and dental supervision that you get at the dental office. Ask us how to prepare yourself before, during and after the whitening procedure.

Make sure you mention your sensitive teeth to us during your next visit. It's important for us to have a look at the sensitive tooth, especially if the pain is intense or prolonged, as we will want to ensure that the problem is simply a sensitive tooth and not anything more serious.

# HIGH ALERT!

## HOW'S YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE?



High blood pressure, or hypertension, affects an estimated 25 to 30 percent of our population. It is known as the “silent killer” because in many cases, the patient is not aware of any problems, and doesn’t notice any symptoms. Normal blood pressure is 120/80, and anything over this on a consistent basis is considered high. Hypertension can be a contributing factor to heart failure, strokes, kidney failure and blindness.

Hypertension is usually linked to one of these primary risk triggers: tobacco use, poor nutrition, obesity and lack of exercise. If you’re diabetic too, your chance of developing hypertension is especially high.

Please be sure to tell us if you have high blood pressure. We will then keep this in mind when scheduling your dental

appointment. For example, because the increase in blood pressure in a hypertensive patient is associated with the hours immediately after waking up, usually peaking by midmorning, we will recommend an afternoon appointment when the fluctuation of blood pressure is less likely.

As much as we try to keep our dental environment friendly and relaxing, it’s common to feel some anxiety about some dental treatments. You may want to use a sedative the night before a dental procedure to help counter any rise in blood pressure. Avoiding caffeine before the appointment, and even scheduling shorter appointments may help too.

Please keep us aware of your overall health issues so that we can do our best to safely accommodate your dental needs.

## THINGS THE TOOTH FAIRY FORGOT TO MENTION

**If you’re scheduled to have a tooth pulled, you need to be prepared not only for what the procedure itself involves, but also how to care for your mouth following the extraction.**



In many cases, patients aren’t given post-operative care instructions until the extraction is complete, and they are wobbling out the door. Take a minute to read these tips, so that you’re better prepared if or when the time comes.

Depending on the surgery, you’ll most likely have painkillers in your system when you leave the office, so consider having someone available to drive you home, and to fill any prescriptions for you.

Once you get home you may want to celebrate having the troublesome tooth out of your way, but be warned... this is not the time to have an alcoholic drink! In fact, avoid alcohol for at least 24 hours as it can encourage bleeding and delay healing. Be careful with all foods and drinks, especially hot ones, until the anesthetic wears off. You won’t be able to feel heat properly and may burn or scald your mouth.

The first 24 hours after surgery is critical for the recovery of the affected area. Don’t panic if there is some bleeding following the procedure. Avoid rinsing out your mouth for the first day, instead pressing a patch of clean gauze firmly on the bleeding socket and holding it for at least 15 minutes each time. Replace the gauze as necessary, and call us if the bleeding persists. Keep ice packs or even bags of frozen peas handy to apply to any swelling on your face. After the first 24 hours, rinse your mouth out twice a day with a glass of warm salt water to encourage the healing process.

While the tooth fairy may not be leaving any money under your pillow this time, getting rid of a diseased or damaged tooth will pay for itself many times over in improved dental comfort and health.



# YOUR BEST INVESTMENT EVER!

While we can't control the investments we've made in the financial market, we can certainly control the investments we make in ourselves, and benefit directly from the positive results they yield. One of the easiest, most effective personal improvements people can invest in is cosmetic dentistry.

Cosmetic dentistry can involve something as easy as teeth whitening, or as practical as increasing the functionality of teeth by strengthening them with dental crowns. A combination of simple treatments involving teeth whitening, gum reshaping and veneers or bonding, can produce a sexy smile that will take years off your appearance. Your new look could work wonders not only with your appearance, but also with your self-confidence, which affects your personal and professional life.

An attractive, positive personal image can open doors. In fact, a recent study asked panel members to quickly judge their perceptions of people before and after cosmetic dentistry. The results were significant, with respondents giving higher ratings to "after" pictures of people when it came to how attractive, popular with the opposite sex, wealthy and successful in their careers the subjects appeared.

Whether you're job-hunting, seeking a new relationship or just feeling like you need a boost in your appearance, consider investing in yourself – and your image – first.



## WHAT TO DO ABOUT DIASTEMA?

Diastema is the word used to describe the space between two teeth. Some people choose to embrace the look (think Madonna and David Letterman) while others prefer a more uniform appearance in their smile. If you'd like to fill a gap between two teeth, consider these options.

**BRACES**, to move your teeth closer to each other. This could take anywhere from one to four years, depending on your situation.

**DENTAL BONDING**. Dental composite bonding materials can be used as a quick, easy and relatively inexpensive solution to fill gaps. Bonding can also restore chipped or broken teeth, and reshape and recolor teeth.

**CROWNS** are new outside surfaces for your teeth. These "caps" are designed to straighten the look of your smile, and correct the spacing between your teeth.

**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 teeth, we'd be pleased to explain the option that would serve your individual situation best.

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



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### Office Team:

Christine *Office Manager/Dental Assistant*  
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### 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

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