



News From the Office of:



Dr. Joseph A. DeLapa

The pages of the calendar seem to turn faster every year. And so, with the end of 2009 already in sight, we're advising our patients to take a moment and review where they stand from a dental perspective for this year.

First of all, if you have dental insurance you should try to take advantage of the services it covers. If your benefits are calculated on an annual basis and you stand to lose what you don't use by December 31, then please call us to maximize your benefits before the end of the year.

Secondly, this is the season that leads up to end-of-year holiday parties. If you anticipate a busy upcoming schedule, make sure you book not only your regular dental appointment now, while you have some time, but also think about teeth whitening or any other cosmetic dentistry you may require to make your smile shine through all your social events.

Thank you for your continued support. We look forward to seeing you again soon!

Joseph A. DeLapa, D.D.S.

Dr. Joseph A. DeLapa

DEFINITION OF THE PERFECT SMILE

The "perfect" smile starts with strong teeth and healthy gums — this should be the first priority for anyone considering a smile improvement. Once this basic goal is achieved, you'll want to examine all your cosmetic dentistry options, to see how best to create the most esthetically ideal smile for you.



There is a natural law of beauty called the Golden Proportion, which, when applied to dentistry, means your smile should have the natural symmetry, shape, size and contour to fit your face.

A golden smile includes symmetry of the two front teeth as well as the neighboring teeth. Even if you don't have a natural symmetry around the centerline, we can create the illusion of evenness by lining up your two front teeth, as well as the adjacent teeth that are close to the midline, to create a balanced image.

The evenness and proper length of your gums is important too, as gums that are too long or too short can completely alter the look of your teeth, no matter how perfect your teeth are. Maybe you have an excess of gum covering your front teeth, making them look short and your smile too "gummy." Or perhaps your gums are uneven, mak-

ing your teeth look like they're different lengths. Gum reshaping, a fairly simple in-office procedure, can even out your gums, and therefore improve the whole balance of your smile.

There are scientific ratios associated with the ideal smile, including the size and proportion of teeth, lips and gums, as well as how the nose unifies the sum of the parts to create the ideal profile. Your smile line, which ideally follows the curve of your lower lip, connects the biting edges of the top teeth. A curved smile line can make you look significantly younger, while a flat smile line looks aged and worn. There's even something called a reverse smile line, which results in a reverse arch.

Please ask us to explain the perfect ratio of the face, and how dentistry can provide you with your own perfect, golden smile.

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MOTHER NATURE'S SMILE SYSTEM

Nature provides some interesting features in the mouths of both land and water beings. For example, did you know that elephant tusks are actually modified incisors? The visible part of the tooth arises from the upper jaw to form the familiar-looking tusk, while a quarter to a third of each tooth remains firmly embedded in the elephant's skull.

Sharks, on the other hand, have a much more disposable approach to teeth. They have about five rows of teeth on each of their upper and lower jaws that function somewhat like a conveyor belt. As one tooth is damaged or lost, a tooth in the next row replaces it. The sets of teeth rotate forward and new teeth continuously form in the rear.

Humans, once their "baby" teeth have been substituted with permanent ones, aren't as lucky as sharks when it comes to automatic tooth replacements. We are, however, fortunate that modern dentistry offers a variety of options that serve as the next best thing!

Options for replacing a missing tooth or teeth depend on a number of different factors, from quantity and location of missing teeth, to how healthy the patient's gums and

jawbone are, to budgeting issues.

Please call us to arrange for a full explanation of all your tooth replacement options, including one or a combination of the following:

- Removable partial dentures.
- Fixed dental bridges.
- Full dentures, for patients who have lost all of their teeth on the top and/or bottom of their mouth.
- Dental implants, which involve surgically implanting a replacement tooth root and then capping it with a natural-looking replacement tooth.

We look forward to completing your smile!

THE SCIENCE OF SALIVA

Your oral health depends on many factors: obvious daily dental habits such as brushing and flossing your teeth, and other things you may not think of, such as the amount of saliva in your mouth.



Saliva, known as "nature's mouthwash," is necessary to lubricate the mouth, wash food away, neutralize the acids produced by plaque and prevent infections by controlling bacteria and fungi in the mouth. It actually forms a protective film on the teeth, and its slightly alkaline pH helps neutralize acids (from food and drink, bacteria or the digestive process) that could erode tooth enamel.

A reduction in the amount of saliva in the mouth can be influenced by many different factors, including a temporary dry mouth from anxiety or stress, to short-term dryness from radiation and certain medications, to daily dryness from mouth breathing, to Sjögren's syndrome, diabetes or other diseases that affect the salivary glands. Dry mouth, also known as xerostomia, can even be an effect of aging.

Common symptoms of dry mouth include:

- A sticky, dry feeling in the mouth, including a dry, red, raw

tongue and a dry feeling in the throat.

- Sores in the mouth; sores or split skin at the corners of the mouth; cracked lips.
- Frequent thirst, bad breath, problems speaking, difficulty tasting, chewing and swallowing.

If dry mouth is a constant condition for you, it can be uncomfortable, cause difficulties in talking and eating, and increase your chances of developing dental decay and other infections of the mouth. People with dry mouth have to be extra attentive to their daily dental routines — brushing and flossing vigilantly to remove plaque buildup, and maintaining regular continuing-care appointments.

Please talk to us about how to make your condition more comfortable and keep your teeth and mouth healthy.



THE INSIDE (AND OUTSIDE!) STORY ON TOOTH STAINS

While bright, white teeth are considered the ideal in an attractive smile, the reality is that most of us have some degree of staining on our teeth. Why do our teeth stain, and what can we do to prevent it?

It all starts with our genetic makeup. Teeth get their color from dentin, the material that composes the principal mass of teeth, located under the enamel (outer layer). Dentin itself can be yellowish, or even appear gray or brown, and reflects through the transparent enamel to affect how white your teeth look. Even though a hard enamel covers the dentin, it is still susceptible to staining. Staining within the dentin is referred to as an intrinsic stain, while staining on the outside surface of the tooth is called extrinsic staining.

Intrinsic staining can result from other factors besides simply being born with it. For example, some medications can permanently darken and stain teeth. An example is tetracycline, an antibiotic commonly prescribed for the treatment of acne. Tetracycline can stain the teeth of the patients most likely to be in the market for this drug — children and teenagers whose teeth are still developing.

Another cause of intrinsic staining for children is dental fluorosis, a condition that presents itself as white spots or lines on the teeth. It can occur if a child ingests too much water with a high fluoride concentration, or uses an excessive amount of toothpaste containing fluoride. For this reason we recommend you place only a dab — a pea-sized amount — of toothpaste on your child's toothbrush before brushing.

While white spots on teeth can indicate dental fluorosis, dark spots can indicate tooth decay. In addition, intrinsic staining may result from dental trauma, as the dentin inside a tooth can darken due to a dead nerve. And one final thing that none of us can avoid — simple aging — can also contribute to the darkened appearance of our teeth as our enamel thins.

Extrinsic stains usually result from things within our control — things we voluntarily put in our mouths like tobacco, and staining, sugary and acidic foods and drinks.

So now that we know why our teeth are stained, what can we do to bring them back to their original whiteness? Luckily, modern dentistry provides lots of options, with a tooth whitening solution to fit every situation and budget.

Extrinsic stains are the easiest to solve as they affect just the tooth surface. Good oral hygiene at home and regular continuing care appointments with professional cleanings at the dental office are a great start. From there, we can discuss the features of in-office tooth whitening versus take-home whitening trays, and what works best in your individual situation.

In-office whitening, which provides an “instant” improvement by lightening your teeth several shades in just one session, is ideal for people who want a brighter, whiter smile immediately. Patients who have more time, and are interested in a more economical option, will want to hear about take-home tooth whitening kits. Both options work: The important thing is that the program be issued and, when possible, supervised by your dentist for the safest, most effective results.

Because intrinsic stains are under the enamel surface, they do not respond to tooth whitening programs, but they can be solved very successfully with dental veneers or bonding materials. Veneers are thin shells of porcelain that are individually crafted to bond onto the front of each tooth to not only perfect the color of your smile, but also close gaps, hide surface ridges and correct uneven or chipped teeth.

Please ask us about the many easy and effective options we can offer to create your brightest, most attractive smile possible!



PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Are you a victim of “patchwork” dentistry? Perhaps a crown here, a veneer there, a few metal fillings mixed in with white replacement fillings, a front tooth restoration that doesn’t match the adjacent teeth, and other one-time dental repairs done at various times over the past few years? It could be time to “unite the white” by updating your smile with the latest cosmetic dentistry improvements!

The problem with patchwork dentistry is twofold: Diminished esthetics, and lessened functionality.

Teeth that don’t match — visually and structurally — can impact your smile on both a physical and a mental level. Physically, if you have teeth that don’t fit together perfectly when you bite down, or if you have a missing tooth or teeth that have left a gap for other teeth to slide into, you could experience a host of problems from dental decay and chipped teeth to headaches. Socially, you may feel self-conscious of your smile, and how it affects how other people perceive you.

We invite you to come in for a comprehensive examination of your dental needs, and an explanation of the new options that modern dentistry can provide. We’ll create an individualized treatment plan detailing our recommendations based on your own needs and wants, and explain how we can restore your whole mouth so it works together comfortably, and beautifully.

YOUR DREAM SMILE WISH LIST

You’ve admired other people’s smiles in the past, and perhaps wondered how cosmetic dentistry might improve your own smile. There are so many new and exciting dental procedures available these days, which can be performed faster, more comfortably and at less cost than you may imagine. Why wait any longer?

Check off the procedures you’d like to learn more about, and bring this list to your next dental appointment. We look forward to creating the smile you’ve always wished for!

☒ **YES! I’d like to hear more about these Smile Improvements:**

- ☐ Fast, In-Office Teeth Whitening
- ☐ Take-Home Whitening Kits
- ☐ Porcelain Veneers
- ☐ Porcelain Crowns
- ☐ Correcting Worn and Misshapen Teeth
- ☐ Filling Gaps Between Teeth
- ☐ Straightening Teeth
- ☐ Replacing Missing Teeth
- ☐ Replacing Metal Fillings With White Fillings
- ☐ Gum Contouring
- ☐ Tooth Contouring
- ☐ Full Smile Makeovers
- ☐ Other: _____

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Standing From Left to Right:
Alexis, Sophie & Dr. DeLapa
Sitting From Left to Right:
Christine & Maureen

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Sophie • *Registered Dental 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

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