



# Dental Health News®

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

## News From the Office of:



**Dr. Joseph A. DeLapa**

Welcome to our first newsletter for 2010! We hope you enjoy this dental update.

We believe it's a good idea to start a new year with a few dental reminders, from the importance of good oral hygiene for your optimum dental health, to how to ensure your brightest, most attractive smile.

If you haven't already booked your next checkup, please consider doing that now. And if you've noticed that your teeth are stained from too much coffee, tea or red wine from the holiday party season, ask us how easily we can help bring the white sparkle back to your smile.

We look forward to seeing you again soon!

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

Dr. Joseph A. DeLapa

## NEW AND IMPROVED!

**A beautiful smile is a magnet for attracting positive reactions from both friends and strangers. Does your smile reflect the image you want to project?**



Have a look at the common tooth problems listed below. If you can relate to one or more, please ask us to explain how we can solve them, right here in our office, with modern procedures that are more comfortable, less expensive and less complicated than you might imagine.

### **My teeth are yellow and discolored.**

This is probably the most common complaint we hear in our office, but, luckily, also one of the easiest to solve. Ask us about different whitening techniques, from in-office "instant" whitening, to take-home kits, to options for teeth that don't respond to regular whitening techniques.

### **My teeth are too small for my mouth.**

Your teeth may be too small for the space allotted, resulting in gaps between your teeth — most noticeably the top, front teeth. Depending on the degree of space between the teeth, we can close the gaps using crowns, veneers, bonding or orthodontics.

### **My teeth are chipped and worn.**

Chipped, worn teeth can affect the aesthetic value of

your smile, and, subsequently, how you project yourself. Remember that teeth can't repair themselves, and in fact, once the enamel on your teeth has been compromised, there is a high possibility you'll experience more breakage on the affected teeth. Allow us to present options to protect and correct compromised teeth.

### **I'm missing one or more teeth.**

In addition to the undesirable look of a smile that's missing a tooth or teeth, there are also a number of non-cosmetic reasons to fill gaps in your mouth with replacement teeth. Please ask us to explain your tooth replacement options to prevent further problems — from shifting of the remaining teeth, leading to crooked teeth and the risk of dental decay, to jaw pain and headaches.

These are just some of the dental concerns we can help with. If you're even the slightest bit self-conscious about your smile, you owe it to yourself to come in and learn more about your dental options.

We look forward to creating your "new and improved" magnetic smile!

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# SAY "AHHH," NOT "ACKKK"!

Your gag reflex is nature's way of protecting you from choking on objects not intended for swallowing. Many people gag or have the feeling of wanting to vomit when they put their fingers too far back in their mouths, while others will experience the same sensation when a dental staff touches their soft palates (the entrance to the throat) or even a point closer to the opening of their mouths with a dental instrument.



While this natural self-defense mechanism is a necessary life-saving reaction, it can make going to the dentist uncomfortable for people with a sensitive gag reflex.

There are all kinds of ways to try to avoid gagging, such as:

- Breathing through your nose while we work on your mouth.
- Meditating.
- Listening to music on your headphones.
- Or even focusing on trying to keep your feet elevated one inch off the chair as a distraction technique.

The most important first step, however, is to discuss your sensitive gag reflex with us, in addition to any other fears or concerns. Whether it's a fear of the dental office, with its instruments and smells, or thoughts of "painful" procedures, or a concern about your sensitive gag reflex, it's always better to talk to us about it before we begin even a preliminary examination of your mouth.

**Don't let your fears hold you back. Let's talk.**



## WINING, DINING ... AND STAINING?

Most people are aware of the teeth-staining effects of deeply colored foods such as berries and curries, and the "Dracula" effect that some people's teeth have after drinking red wine. However, what surprises many people is learning that white wine is also a teeth-staining culprit.

Results of a study at New York University School of Dentistry showed that drinking white wine could increase the potential for teeth to take on dark stains. The explanation is that the acids in wine, whether red or white, create rough spots and grooves in teeth, enabling stains from other beverages such as coffee or tea to penetrate deeper into the teeth. So, will brushing your teeth immediately after consuming either red or white wine counter any staining effects?

"No," most dental experts will answer.

The high acidity in wine renders your teeth sensitive to abrasion. Brush too soon after indulging in any kind of wine and you'll risk damaging the enamel. Instead, keep the toothbrush away for at least an hour, and rinse your mouth out with water or eat some cheese.

Eating cheese after a meal can actually help protect your teeth against cavities, too, as it speeds the neutralization

of acid and remineralization of enamel. After a meal, the pH level in your mouth often drops and your mouth becomes more acidic — a potentially damaging situation for teeth. Eating a piece of cheese neutralizes the acids and helps maintain a pH balance in your mouth that is safe for teeth. Eating cheese can also help to increase the amount of saliva in the mouth, which aids in rinsing other food particles away.

Counteracting the acidic effects of wine and foods with the neutralizing qualities of cheese adds up to a delicious, teeth-friendly solution for wine aficionados and teetotalers alike.





**Your childhood memories of going to the dentist probably center on the hunt for cavities, and then your parents' reaction to the damage. Now that you're an adult, you may feel you're unsusceptible to cavities — but you're not.**

# CAVITIES: NOT JUST FOR KIDS!

The road to a cavity (a dental "carie") begins with the reaction between certain bacteria and what we put in our mouths. Many types of bacteria live naturally in our mouths. When combined with food debris and saliva, bacteria accumulate on the surface of teeth to form a sticky film called plaque. Plaque needs to be removed daily, otherwise it combines with the sugars and starches we eat to produce acids that then attack the tooth enamel and begin the road to dental decay.

Therefore, it stands to reason that, in order to prevent caries, we need to reduce the amount of plaque in our mouths. The simplest way to do this is by flossing daily, brushing our teeth at least twice a day, and maintaining a regular schedule of professional dental cleanings. You can also reduce the amount of acid produced in your mouth by paying more attention to your eating schedule. Snacking throughout the day — especially with sugary or starchy foods — encourages cavities, as it provides a constant supply of food for bacteria to feed on, triggering continuous attacks from acids.

As with most things, it's more comfortable, less invasive and less expensive to catch and fix problems early, which is why dentists always remind patients of the importance of maintaining regular dental checkups. Only a dentist can identify early dental decay; once you feel sensitivity to sweet foods, or to hot and cold temperatures, it usually means the decay has already eaten through the enamel.

Let's discuss and evaluate what factors could contribute to your risk of developing cavities. You may be surprised to discover the factors in your diet that encourage dental decay — not only "kid stuff" like candy and other sugary products, but also carbohydrates and non-sugary, acidic beverages such as diet soda.

Even "healthy" snacks of dried fruit can be just as much of a cavity risk as a mouthful of ju-jubes or other chewy candy because of the sticky nature of the snack, which prolongs the exposure to the tooth surface. Likewise, popping breath mints or sipping drinks other than water over a prolonged period throughout the day can be just as damaging to your teeth as sucking on a lollipop or other hard candy, which creates a constant supply of acid in your mouth.

We won't take all the fun out of your day by telling you to avoid every treat, but we do suggest you consider a quickly dissolving candy such as chocolate instead of hard candy to avoid extended exposure to the teeth's surfaces, and try to include treats with your meal rather than as a separate snack. Remember, too, to rinse your mouth or, even better, to brush your teeth after consuming any snacks.

Good oral hygiene, in addition to being aware of what you put in your mouth and when, will give you the best chance of avoiding plaque attacks, thus keeping your teeth free of decay.

With each new year comes the anticipation of fresh beginnings. Why not call us to book your 2010 dental pick-me-up, and ask about simple ways to rejuvenate your smile?



## A REJUVENATING REFILL

In addition to teeth whitening — the easiest, safest and quickest way to brighten your smile — many patients are requesting that we scrap the metal in their mouths and replace it with natural-looking “white” composite materials.

More and more people are recognizing the many advantages of the white composite material that has become the tooth filling of choice for today’s dental patient. In fact, white fillings are not only aesthetically pleasing, they also have the convenience of quick curing (hardening), allowing your tooth to be fully functional as soon as you leave our office.

Our teeth are under constant stress, causing fillings to eventually crack, chip, fall out or simply wear away over time. The key to avoiding unnecessary discomfort is to try staying one step ahead of any loose or worn fillings by replacing them before they become a painful problem — a preemptive and relatively simple procedure that will be more economical and comfortable for you in the long run.

Ask us to replace your old, metal fillings with natural looking composites, and find out how easy it is to bring a fresh, young look back to your smile.

## THE LAST WORD ON: COSMETIC CONTOURING

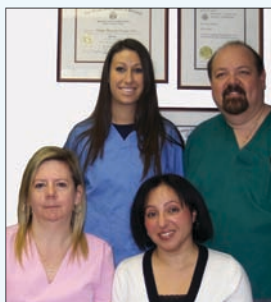
Many of us have one or more teeth that are slightly misshapen or out of place. We don’t consider them an impediment, but the look of them bothers us from time to time. If you can personally relate, you’ll be pleased to learn that in many cases your smile can be perfected with minimal time, effort and expense through in-office tooth reshaping.

Tooth reshaping, or contouring, is an instant, pain-free solution to minor cosmetic imperfections, such as slightly crooked, chipped, cracked or overlapping teeth.

In most cases, we would simply remove some of the surface enamel from your tooth in order to eliminate or minimize the imperfection. We would then contour your tooth into an esthetically pleasing shape, and then smooth and polish it for an improved new smile. In some cases, tooth bonding may be necessary to complement the reshaping procedure and fill in any gaps.

**Ask us how easy it is to smooth out your smile!**

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



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Sophie & Dr. DeLapa  
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Christine & Maureen

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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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