



News From the Office of:



Dr. Joseph A. DeLapa

With the sleepy days of summer now behind us, it's time to get back to our regular work and school schedules.

If fall also includes a new sports season for the athletes in your household, don't forget to have them fitted for custom-made mouthguards, which can protect not only their teeth, but also help prevent serious concussions.

Looking ahead, remember that many insurance companies calculate dental benefits on a calendar year. 2010 is marching on, so if you have dental benefits to use up by year-end, it's in your best interest to call us and book an appointment. Calling now will ensure an appointment time that works best with your schedule.

We look forward to seeing you again soon!

Joseph A. DeLapa, D.D.S.

Dr. Joseph A. DeLapa

DO'S AND DON'TS FOR WHITENING SUCCESS

Tooth whitening is so common these days that you may not think about how to prepare prior to your appointment. But, for the best whitening results, you'll want to review these points:



Before Tooth Whitening

- **DO** make a regular dental appointment prior to your whitening appointment, so we can check for, and address, any decay, gum disease and hypersensitivity. For best results, you will also need a professional cleaning to remove any tartar.
- **DO** talk to us about your whitening expectations as, depending on the cause of the staining, whitening may or may not be your most effective option.
- **DO** be aware that whitening will not affect the color of veneers, crowns or existing restorations.
- **DON'T** brush immediately before your whitening appointment, as this may cause abrasion and sensitivity.
- **DO** start using desensitizing toothpaste a couple of weeks prior to your whitening procedure if you're prone to sensitive teeth.

After Tooth Whitening

- **DON'T** eat or drink anything after your whitening treatment that might stain your teeth (coffee, tea, red wine, curry, and fruit such as blueberries, etc).
- **DON'T** use tobacco — whether smoked or chewed — as it creates another serious staining risk.
- **DO** make follow-up appointments to monitor the success of your whitening program, and to talk to us about the most effective ways to extend the life of your new, white smile.

In cases where tooth discoloration is beyond surface staining, whitening may not be the most effective solution. Dental veneers, crowns and bonding are popular alternatives.

A professional opinion is your first step toward beginning the safest, brightest and most successful tooth whitening program. Please call to reserve your tooth whitening consultation today!



STRESSING THE BOTTOM LINE

Connecting your stress level to your gum line to your financial bottom line may not seem like a logical track of association, but you may be surprised at how one can affect the other.

For many people, today's stressful environment stems from money, and the economy in general. Chronic stress can initiate a host of health problems, including a weakened immune system, high blood pressure, and even periodontal (gum) disease. Indeed, chronic stress is associated with higher and more prolonged levels of the hormone cortisol, which research has indicated can lead to a more destructive form of gum disease.

Gum disease is typically triggered by a bacterial infection in the mouth. The American Academy of Periodontology has evidence that links infections in the mouth to other, seemingly unrelated, medical problems in some people, including a higher risk of heart disease, stroke, uncontrolled diabetes, preterm births and respiratory disease.

Therefore, it's easy to understand why a study published in the Journal of Periodontology documents that patients with severe gum disease have 21 percent higher health care costs, compared to patients with no gum disease. With this information in hand, the connecting line from your mouth to your wallet becomes ever clearer.

Even if nothing in your mouth hurts, we cannot stress strongly enough the importance of regular dental checkups. Gum disease, for one, is something that is often hard to detect without a formal examination, which is why your dental visits should be a regular part of your overall health schedule. We urge you to be diligent with your dental appointments, especially if you already have heart or lung disease, diabetes or osteoporosis and low bone mass, if you are thinking of becoming pregnant, or if you have a family member with gum disease. Routine oral examinations can also uncover symptoms of oral cancer, eating disorders, substance abuse and HIV.

Stress can trigger a quick spiral into bad habits, which can then affect physical and mental health. Smokers tend to increase their tobacco use — a proven trigger to gum disease — while drinkers may step up their alcohol dependency. Stress can also lead to depression, which affects people's desire to take care of themselves, including oral hygiene neglect. Not brushing or flossing allows the accumulation of plaque, tartar and bacteria to collect on and between the teeth, inflaming the gums and precipitating gum disease.

Nighttime teeth grinding (bruxism) is another common stress indicator. Patients are often surprised to learn that their sore jaws and frequent headaches are a direct result of teeth grinding, or that they even grind their teeth at all! A professional dental inspection will confirm bruxism, and we can create a nightguard, and make recommendations on how to further reduce the trauma caused by the grinding.

Managing stress and its effects on our mental, physical, and financial health begins with taking care of small concerns before they become big, expensive problems. Don't wait until there's a problem.



**If you haven't
already scheduled
your next dental
appointment,
please call us
today.**



PLEASE ASK US

about tooth-friendly snacks, and other ways to fight acid erosion on your teeth.

AN APPLE A DAY KEEPS THE DENTIST AT BAY?

More and more people these days are making a conscious effort to replace unhealthy snacks with fruit, and soda with fruit juice. At the same time, dentists are beginning to notice more signs of acid wear on patients' teeth. The explanation for this paradox is that it isn't what you eat or drink, but how you consume them.

To counteract the effect of fruits and other acidic foods on tooth enamel, it helps to pair the foods with cheese or nuts. For example, consider munching on a few nuts after finishing your apple. Similarly, balance the acidic effect of your glass of wine or juice by following it with some cheese. These healthy pairings are delicious ways to protect your teeth while adding additional health benefits to your diet.

Fruit juices are another deceptive choice. While obviously better than soda from a nutritional standpoint, fruit juices do

contain natural sugars and acids. Parents feeding their baby juice are urged to wipe their child's teeth and gums with a soft, wet washcloth following the feeding, and to never to let the baby fall asleep with a bottle of juice in his or her mouth.

Following an acidic food or drink, remember to rinse your mouth with water, but don't brush. Brushing can actually expedite the acid's eroding effect on the teeth. Wait at least an hour, allowing enough time for the acidity in your mouth to neutralize before you brush.

WORKING OUT A SAFE SMILE

If you play sports regularly or engage in a dedicated exercise program, your healthy initiatives are commendable. But before you stretch and don your protective gear, your dental team wants to ensure you remember to protect your smile, too.



Our first piece of advice for any athlete is to get fitted for a professional mouthguard. Even if your chosen activity isn't a contact sport such as football or hockey, your mouth still needs to be protected from any kind of impact or stress. In fact, even weightlifters — who subconsciously clench their teeth when hoisting heavy weights — are wise to wear a mouthguard to avoid the risk of tooth fractures.

Bodybuilders and other athletes who use anabolic androgenic steroids should also be aware that, according to the American Academy of Periodontology, prolonged use of these drugs is closely associated with gingival overgrowth. Meaning, steroid users may suffer from overgrown gums, a condition that makes it easier for bacteria found in plaque

to accumulate and attack supporting structures of the teeth, potentially leading to gum infections.

As well, the consumption of sports drinks is a popular way to re-hydrate after a workout, but be aware of the corrosive interaction between these beverages and your teeth. To help, consume your sports drink in one sitting, instead of sipping it throughout your activity, therefore limiting the amount of time your teeth enamel is exposed to the drink's acids.

Ask us for more tips on sporting good dental health. And remember, we're all on your dental-health team!



THE LONG AND THE SHORT OF IT

We often see patients who recognize they have healthy gums and teeth, but aren't happy with their smiles because their teeth appear either too short or too long. If this sounds like you, you'll be interested in hearing how easily we can uncover more tooth surface to make teeth appear longer, or cover excess tooth surface to shorten the look of teeth.

Excessive or uneven gums can distract from an otherwise attractive smile. If this is the case — don't worry — gum lifts that expose more of the tooth crown are a common and effective way to unveil your perfect smile. On the other end, smiles that are "long in the tooth" can be addressed with soft tissue grafts and other root coverage procedures.

Ask us how easy it is to sculpt your gumline to even out and balance your smile, while improving both your dental health and your cosmetic appeal.

Many people who make the decision to whiten their teeth become so pleased with the results that they increase the frequency of their whitening program, believing that if white teeth are good, whiter teeth must be better. What's the right white for you?

Some people try to match the color of their teeth to the whites of their eyes. However, a more effective way to get a good idea of your ideal tooth shade is to view our shade guides. Together, we'll match your current tooth color to the corresponding color on the chart, then show you how whitening can change that shade. Even a change of two or three shades can make an impressive difference in a smile.

It's important to remember that a lot of the "Hollywood" smiles people aim for may involve more

than just tooth whitening. While whitening will certainly reverse years of everyday staining to give you a younger, fresher appearance, you may want to find out more about bonding, crowns and dental veneers, which will provide both the tooth color, and the perfect tooth shape and smile symmetry you desire.

Please ask us to explain the many cosmetic dentistry options available, to provide you with the white, confident, beautiful smile of your dreams.

Joseph A. DeLapa, D.D.S.



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Office Team:

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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