



# 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 2011! You're invited to share our resolution of making this the healthiest year ever, from both a dental and an overall health perspective.

We'd like to reinforce the importance of good oral hygiene and regular dental visits for your optimum dental health. An excellent preventive measure to avoiding serious dental problems is to maintain a regular checkup schedule, which will detect any problems early, before they become big, expensive issues.

If you haven't already booked your next checkup, please start the new year on a healthy note by calling for a dental appointment now.

We look forward to seeing you again soon!

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

Dr. Joseph A. DeLapa

## BEST WISHES FOR A BRIGHT NEW YEAR!

2011 should be celebrated with a healthy dose of optimism and smiles. But if you're in the habit of covering your smile with your hand because of discolored teeth, then it's time to make a resolution to finally fix that problem.



Are you worried that your teeth appear yellow, dull, dark or stained? Are they shaded unevenly? Do you have a crown or old dental work that no longer matches your natural teeth? If you answered "Yes" to any of these questions, you'll want to keep reading.

The first step to resolving the issue is to determine what kind of tooth staining you have. Staining within the dentin is referred to as an intrinsic stain, while staining on the outside surface of the tooth is called extrinsic staining. Extrinsic stains are usually easier to manage than intrinsic stains as they result from things within our control — things we voluntarily put in our mouths, like tobacco, red wine and staining, sugary and acidic foods and drinks. Intrinsic staining can result

from a number of factors, including past tooth trauma, the use of tetracycline antibiotics when you were younger, over-exposure to fluoride, and even the natural thinning of tooth enamel from aging.

Regardless of the reasons for your discolored teeth, you should know that what may have taken years to discolor can be reversed with minimal time and effort on your part. Whether it's simple tooth whitening, completed in as little as an hour, or the application of beautiful veneers to your front teeth, you deserve to be proud of your teeth, and let the world bask in your beautiful, bright smile.

Please call us today to discuss the easy and convenient smile options available right here in our office.

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# DRUGS, DRY MOUTH AND DENTAL DECAY

**Medications can often solve one problem, but then lead to another. As we see in dentistry, one of the common side effects of many drugs, including antidepressants, antihistamines and allergy medications, is dry mouth. By reducing saliva production, dry mouth can leave you susceptible to cavities, excess plaque, fungal infections in the mouth, and bad breath.**



Signs of dry mouth can include: saliva that seems thick or stringy; sores or split skin at the corners of your mouth; bad breath; difficulty speaking or swallowing; a burning or tingling sensation on your tongue; change in your sense of taste; increased plaque, tooth decay and periodontal (gum) disease.

Most of us take saliva for granted, but it is actually an important natural defense system in the mouth. It protects the teeth by washing away sugars and not allowing bacteria to stick on the teeth long enough to promote the development of cavities.

Some tips to help prevent dental decay that stems from dry mouth include:

- Establishing a consistent, daily flossing and brushing routine.

- Using a mouthwash specially formulated for dry-mouth sufferers.
- Chewing sugarless gum, to help stimulate saliva production.
- Drinking more water, and avoiding coffee, tea and other caffeinated drinks, in addition to alcohol, all of which can dry out your mouth.
- Ensuring a frequent schedule of professional dental cleanings.

Please keep us updated on the medications you are on. If a lack of saliva is interfering with your oral health and your enjoyment of food, make sure you talk to us, and to your doctor.

# TOOTHACHE TIPS

**A toothache can be a symptom of a deeper problem, which is why one should never be ignored. Here are a few tips to help provide you with some relief for before you arrive at the dentist:**



- Rinse your mouth out with warm salt water.
- Floss teeth to dislodge any trapped food particles.
- Take aspirin, ibuprofen or acetaminophen to relieve the pain, but do not place an aspirin directly on the affected area.
- Use a cold compress on the outside of your cheek to help relieve any pain or swelling. Never use heat as heat incubates and promotes bacterial growth.

Now, here's a riddle: When is a toothache not a toothache? The answer is, when it's sinusitis.

Sinusitis, the inflammation of one or more sinuses due to a bacterial infection or sinus congestion from a cold,

flu or allergy, can sometimes have the same symptoms as a toothache. As the roots of the upper teeth lie very close to the floor of the maxillary sinuses (the sinuses located between the eye sockets and the upper jaw), any inflammation of these sinuses when a cold, flu or allergy attack can feel like a toothache.

If you are unsure as to the cause of your toothache, please make a dental appointment to have it evaluated, to ensure you receive the proper treatment.



# MEDIATING MOUTH MISERY

From oral irritations to dental disasters, your dentist is your best source of information on how to best soothe your dental distress.

**MOUTH SORES.** Canker sores and cold sores are common, annoying mouth irritations that are often confused with one another.

The first sign of a cold sore is usually a tingling sensation around the mouth, followed by painful, fluid-filled blisters on the lips and around the mouth. The blisters typically burst and scab over, usually healing in about a week.

Canker sores appear *inside* the mouth, presenting as small ulcers with white or gray bases and red borders. A bite or burn inside your mouth can trigger a canker sore, as can certain foods.

Talk to us about the best ways to soothe your mouth sores, and have us check them out if they don't clear up after a week.

**BURNED TONGUE/ BURNED PALATE.** The delicate tissues on your tongue or palate can burn easily from too-hot food or drink in your mouth. In these cases, the first thing you'll want to do is cool the burned area immediately, to not only soothe the burn, but also to make sure the heat loses its power to damage the surrounding cells. The quickest and most effective way to do this is to hold cold water in your mouth, or suck on an ice-cube.

Once the initial burn subsides, allow your injury to heal for a few days by avoiding spicy foods, acidic foods like tomatoes and citrus fruits, irritants like vinegar, and sharp, salty foods like chips.

**KNOCKED-OUT TOOTH.** Whether it's a sports injury, a slip and fall, or perhaps a confrontation with a boxing wannabe, you or someone in your company may suffer the bad luck of having a permanent tooth knocked out or loose.

If it's knocked out, the first thing to do is find your tooth and, holding it by the crown, gently rinse off the root of the tooth with clean water. Do not scrub it or remove any attached tissue fragments — if reconnected immediately, there's a chance the torn periodontal ligaments can reattach to the gums. Carefully place the tooth back in its socket, and bite down gently on a soft cloth or moistened teabag to keep it in place. If the knocked-out tooth, however, belongs to a child or if the patient is not able to keep the tooth safely in his or her mouth, put the tooth in a cup of milk.

If a tooth is only knocked loose, the immediate procedure is very similar: simply guide the tooth back into its proper place with your finger and bite down gently.

In all these instances, call our office immediately, or get to an emergency dental clinic within 30 minutes of the incident, in order to have the best chance of saving the tooth.

Please don't hesitate to call our office for advice on all your dental questions.



## WHAT'S MY BEST OPTION: A CROWN, OR A VENEER?

The role of both porcelain crowns and porcelain veneers is to cover existing teeth with attractive outer shells, resulting in straighter, more even teeth and a beautiful smile. But when do you need porcelain crowns, and when will veneers suffice?

A dental crown fits over your whole tooth to serve as a completely new outer surface. Its strength makes it especially applicable for teeth such as molars, which are subject to significant chewing and biting forces.

Dental veneers, on the other hand, are thin "shells" of porcelain or ceramic that are bonded onto the front side of a tooth (the side that shows when you smile) to cosmetically correct tooth imperfections.

**A dental crown may be recommended in the following situations:**

- To protect a weak tooth from breaking, or to hold together parts of a cracked tooth.

- To restore a broken or worn-down tooth.
- To cover and support a tooth with a large filling.
- To hold a dental bridge in place.
- To cover a tooth that is misshapen or severely discolored.
- To cover a dental implant.

**A dental veneer is often applied:**

- To fill gaps between teeth.
- To correct minor shape problems.
- To produce a whiter appearance to mildly stained or darkened teeth.

Come in and ask us which smile solution may be appropriate for your particular dental improvement.

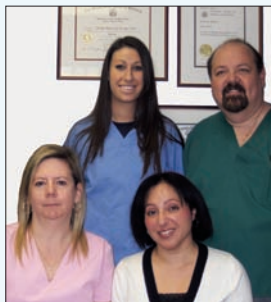
## TIME TO SCRAP THE "METAL MOUTH"!

Dental cavities have traditionally been treated with metal fillings, simply because there was no other choice. Consequently, many people have mouthfuls of unappealing old metal, accepting them as necessary inconveniences. But there's no need to put up with that any more, as you now have the option of having any unsightly metal in your mouth replaced with attractive, tooth-colored fillings.

Modern technology has created an option that allows us to fill or fix teeth with composite resins — natural-looking, white materials that are tinted to blend in with your teeth. Composite resins are stronger now than when they first came out, bonding to teeth to support the tooth structure, which helps prevent breakage. Patients love the fact that white fillings are not only aesthetically pleasing, that they also have the convenience of quick curing (hardening), allowing teeth to be fully functional as soon as you leave our office.

Ask us how easy it is to bring a fresh, young look back into your smile by replacing your existing metal fillings with natural-looking white composites.

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



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Sophie & Dr. DeLapa  
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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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