



DENTAL HEALTH LETTER

Produced for the patients of Catherine L. Forster, D.D.S.

Spring 2009

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Missing a tooth? HAVE IT REPLACED

Implants are allowing people who are only missing a tooth or two to have those few teeth replaced.

An implant is the next best thing to your own natural tooth because it is actually anchored into the bone of the jaw. It will remain in place and look and function just as a natural tooth.

The process of replacing a tooth begins with the insertion of a titanium tooth root into the bone in the location of the missing tooth. The implant is below the gumline and cannot be seen. Next, an abutment will be added, and the new tooth will be placed on that. The tooth itself will be similar to those around it, and the appearance will be natural. As well as looking natural, the tooth will be stable during speaking and eating. Caring for it will require the same brushing and flossing as the other teeth, since it's necessary to remove debris between the implant and the surrounding teeth.

There are many advantages to having a missing tooth restored in this way. When a tooth is missing, the teeth on either side of it can shift. This makes them more difficult to keep clean. If the missing tooth changes your bite, it may be difficult or uncomfortable to chew. Sometimes the joint of the jaw—the temporomandibular joint—can be damaged. This can cause neckache, headache, and a variety of other problems. That's why it's important to save teeth if at all possible. However, when a tooth can't be saved, a fixed (nonremovable) replacement such as an implant may be the next best thing.



Are you clenching?

Clenching your jaw excessively when you are stressed or during sleep or exercise isn't normal. In fact, it can damage teeth and lead to headaches, jaw problems, or cracked teeth. However, for many people, this habit is so entrenched in their lives, they no longer realize they are clenching.

The technical term for clenching and grinding your teeth is bruxism. Untreated, bruxism can wear, fracture, and break teeth, cause hypersensitivity of the teeth to hot and cold, and even loosen teeth. In addition, headaches and jaw pain can result.

Don't wait until bruxism takes a toll on your mouth and your life. Come to us for a diagnosis and the treatment that could ward off the damage and/or pain before it starts. If you find yourself clenching or grinding, give us a call. We'd like to help you avoid the problems associated with this condition.



Our best patients are referred by our best patients. Thank you!

Moms-to-be

Watch your vitamin D

Can a pregnant woman's vitamin D level affect the health of her unborn child's teeth? That's the question a recent study of more than 100 pregnant women sought to answer.

The study checked the women's vitamin D levels during their second trimester of pregnancy. Results showed that only about 10 percent were ingesting enough vitamin D. Use of prenatal vitamins and drinking milk were the main sources of this vital nutrient.

Researchers later examined the women's children for enamel defects and tooth decay. Children who exhibited either of these problems were more likely to be borne by mothers with significantly low levels of vitamin D.

Vitamin D has long been known to be an essential component in the development of strong bones and teeth. However, until now, no study has linked the child's teeth to his or her mother's vitamin D

consumption. Pregnant women should be sure to eat balanced diets and ask their doctors about the need for prenatal vitamins where indicated.



How dentally fit are we?

America has made great strides in improving our dental health over the last several decades. Over 90 percent of us brush our teeth before heading off to bed each night, and more than 80 percent brush every morning. More of us are flossing as well, with 55 percent of those doing so on a daily basis.

However, in some areas, we still have goals to meet. About half of our youth still develop cavities in their permanent teeth before reaching their 17th birthday. Half of us don't receive regular professional dental care, and, worst of all, periodontal disease runs rampant, affecting three-quarters of us.

The good news is that we seem to be ahead of the United Kingdom, where about half the population have teeth that show the effects of poor diets and less-than-stellar oral-health habits.

Unfortunately, many of the bad habits affecting teeth in the U.K. are the same ones in which Americans tend to indulge. Drinking coffee, smoking, and downing colas, flavored waters, juices, and other beverages high in acids are having marked effects across the pond, just as they are in the United States.

The good news is that we are becoming more dentally fit. The percentage of children who have never experienced tooth decay has increased since the early '90s, and more older Americans are keeping their teeth. Although we have far to go, we are headed in the right direction. Good daily home care, regular professional cleanings and oral-health exams, and adjusting diet and other oral habits can all have a positive effect on our dental health and help us to become more dentally fit.



Healthy mouth ... healthy you!

For years, the health of the body and the health of the teeth have been viewed as separate entities—one having no effect on the other. Recently, however, research that has shown relationships between the two has begun to change this line of thinking.

Diseases, specifically diabetes and heart disease, may be more likely to occur in those suffering from poor dental health. Likewise, mouth ailments such as gum disease may indicate the presence of some diseases. Specifics of the association between dental health and overall health are not yet completely clear, but the connection is being researched.

There's no question that, for many, dental health is improving. More people are taking advantage of preventive oral care and practicing better home-care techniques. As a result, people are enjoying better dental health and keeping their teeth longer. Maybe that will translate into better overall health as well.

GOOD NUTRITION IS GOOD FOR YOUR TEETH

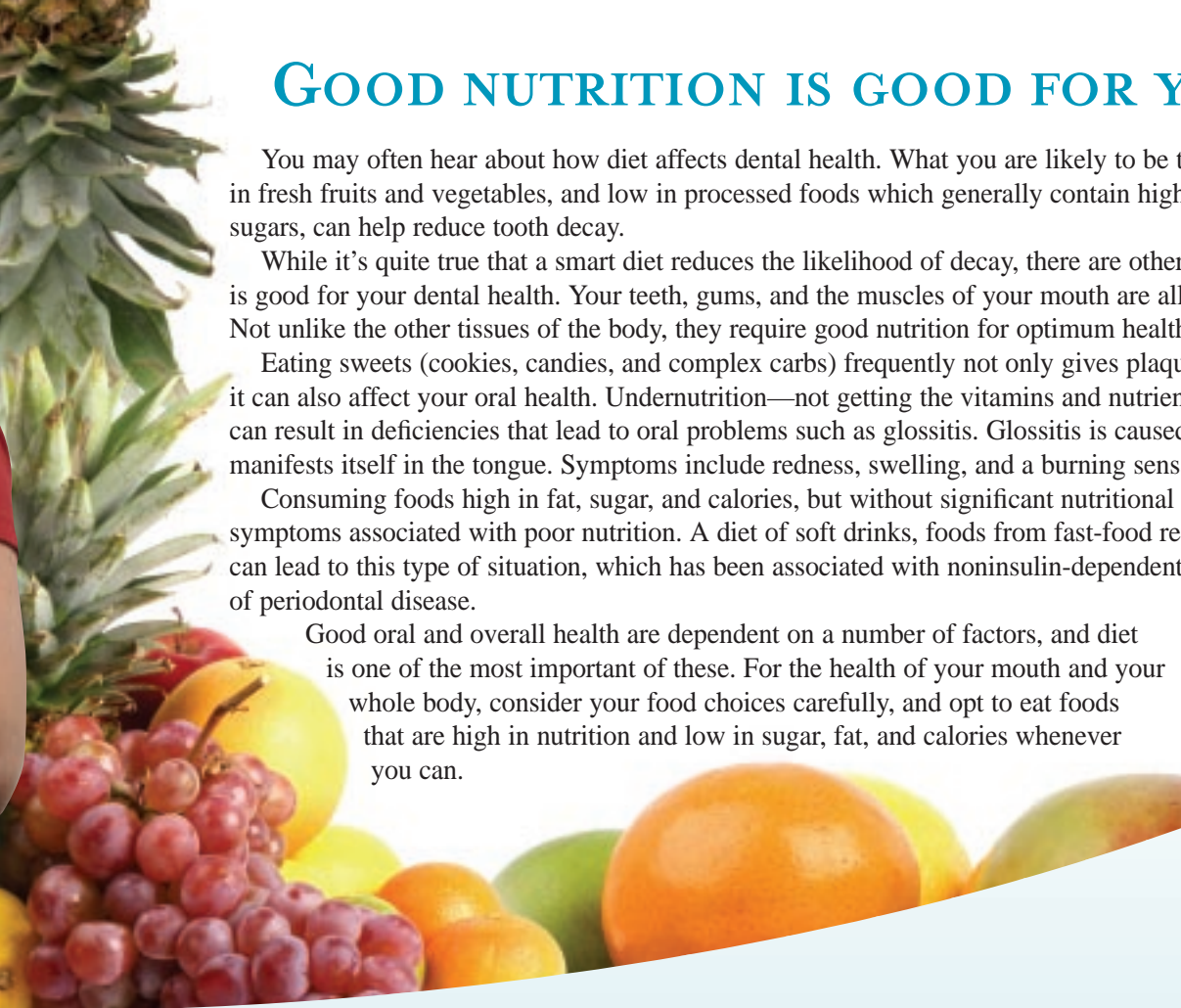
You may often hear about how diet affects dental health. What you are likely to be told is how a balanced diet high in fresh fruits and vegetables, and low in processed foods which generally contain high levels of carbohydrates and sugars, can help reduce tooth decay.

While it's quite true that a smart diet reduces the likelihood of decay, there are other reasons that a healthy diet is good for your dental health. Your teeth, gums, and the muscles of your mouth are all made up of living tissues. Not unlike the other tissues of the body, they require good nutrition for optimum health.

Eating sweets (cookies, candies, and complex carbs) frequently not only gives plaque a foothold in your mouth, it can also affect your oral health. Undernutrition—not getting the vitamins and nutrients you need from your diet—can result in deficiencies that lead to oral problems such as glossitis. Glossitis is caused by a vitamin B deficiency and manifests itself in the tongue. Symptoms include redness, swelling, and a burning sensation.

Consuming foods high in fat, sugar, and calories, but without significant nutritional value, can result in obesity and symptoms associated with poor nutrition. A diet of soft drinks, foods from fast-food restaurants, and prepackaged foods can lead to this type of situation, which has been associated with noninsulin-dependent diabetes and an increased risk of periodontal disease.

Good oral and overall health are dependent on a number of factors, and diet is one of the most important of these. For the health of your mouth and your whole body, consider your food choices carefully, and opt to eat foods that are high in nutrition and low in sugar, fat, and calories whenever you can.



To tell the tooth

As with all our body parts, our teeth have a life cycle. Although they are not apparent in our mouths at birth, they begin to form during the first month or so of development in the womb. By the time a child is born, the front teeth are fully formed within the gums and just waiting to erupt.

That eruption may occur as early as three months, but it might not occur until four months or later. Each of the 20 tooth buds that form in the gums before birth has its own specific form and purpose. When all the teeth work together, they become the perfect force with which to bite, tear, chew, grind, and devour food.

Tooth color varies from person to person, just as eye color does. This is true of baby teeth as well as adult teeth. Shades can range from bright white to ivory to yellowish. The color is determined genetically and often is similar to that of one of the parents, although that may not be readily apparent because of stains to the parent's teeth.

Baby teeth aren't permanent, but they do play an important role in tooth development. Baby teeth are just the right size for the growing child's mouth. They serve to help him or her digest food until the mouth is big enough to accommodate the adult teeth. They also hold spaces for adult teeth to help them come in straight.

The adult molars arrive at the ages of 6, 12, and between the ages of 17 and 21 for wisdom teeth that erupt. The molars are important because they are used to grind food. First and second molars usually pose no problems coming in, but third molars, or wisdom teeth, are often impacted and may need to be surgically removed.

Periodontal disease is one of the worst enemies of adult teeth. It affects the pockets between the gums and the teeth, causing the teeth to loosen.

As teeth age, they are more likely to exhibit cavities in the dentin, which may be exposed by a lifetime of chewing. Because dentin isn't as strong as enamel, it is more prone to cavities.

Fortunately, good dental care can help to keep teeth healthy throughout life. So, to keep smiling from the time those first tiny teeth appear, talk to us. We can recommend both home and professional care customized to your needs, no matter what your age.

Catherine L. Forster, D.D.S., Inc.

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Here's your dental newsletter!

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The information included in this newsletter is not intended as a substitute for dental advice. For your specific situation, please consult our office.

Registration Form for **Great Strides**

We are asking for your help in making Great Strides! On Saturday, May 2, 2009, the Canton Great Strides Walk-A-Thon for Cystic Fibrosis will be held at McKinley Senior High School.

Cystic fibrosis (CF) is a genetic disease that affects more than 30,000 children and adults in the United States. A defective gene causes the body to produce abnormally thick, sticky mucus. The abnormal mucus impairs digestion and leads to chronic and sometimes fatal lung infections. Currently, there is no cure for CF; however, new therapies and treatments are being developed. PLEASE HELP US FIND A CURE!

- In-Kind Donors:** You or your organization can choose to donate an item of your choice to the walk, including food, drinks, goodies, etc.
- Team Leader:** Simply ask 5-10 of your closest friends, family members, or colleagues to join your team, or walk with us! **WE REALLY NEED WALKERS!** Remind your walkers of the date of the walk and their \$150 fund-raising goal. Remember, ask 15 people for \$10 and you're done!
- Walker:** You don't have to be on a team to walk the walk! Join ours or simply go out and do a little of your own fund raising. Just keep in mind your goal of \$150.
- Volunteer:** We always need help the day of the walk! Help with registration, hand out t-shirts, help set up the walk route, or hand out water and food to the walkers.
- Personal Donation:** \$500, \$250, \$100, \$50, \$25, other \$ _____
(Please make checks payable to the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.)
- Corporate Sponsorship:** There is a variety of levels at which you and/or your organization may wish to become a sponsor, including:

<input type="checkbox"/> Site Sponsor	\$5,000 donation	<input type="checkbox"/> Start/Finish Sponsor	\$500 donation
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Please mail or fax this form to:
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Office Hours

Our regular hours are
7:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

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Emily (12) & Jennifer (10)

