



# DENTAL HEALTH LETTER

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

Fall 2009

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## COSMETIC DENTISTRY—

*See what we can do for you!*

We can improve your smile. If you aren't happy with the look of your teeth, chances are good that we can change that. If you tend to smile with your mouth closed or just feel that you don't have the beautiful smile you've always wanted, don't despair. Advances in cosmetic dentistry offer a myriad of ways to reform, reshape, or whiten teeth.

*Here's a sampling of the procedures we offer and what they can do for you:*

■ **WHITENING**—Also known as bleaching, this process can lighten and whiten teeth that have been stained or discolored by age. Both live teeth and teeth that have undergone root-canal procedures can benefit from whitening.

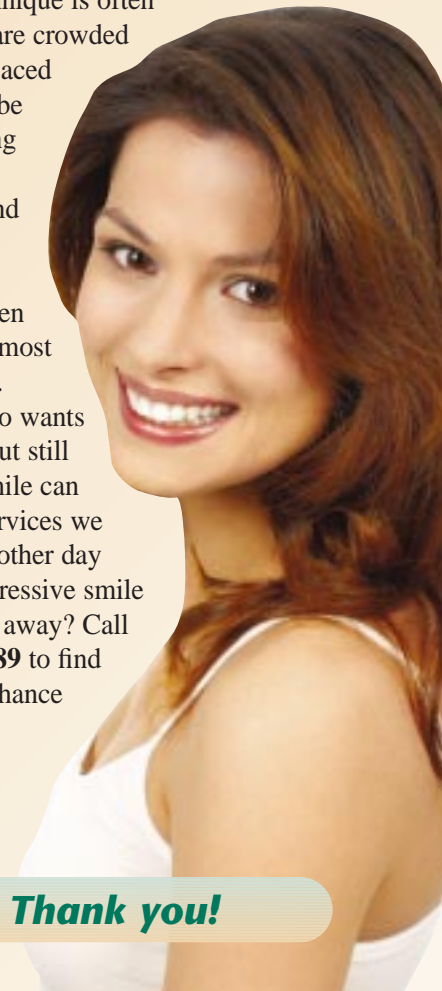
■ **BONDING**—This is the foundation of many cosmetic procedures. It can be used for teeth that have chips or cracks, or that are broken or stained. It's also excellent for gaps between teeth.

■ **PORCELAIN VENEERS**—Fine porcelain covers in colors that match your natural teeth can conceal stains and chips, fill spaces between teeth, or be used for teeth that are somewhat crooked or not shaped nicely. Porcelain is also used in inlays and onlays, and for some crowns and bridges.

■ **COMPOSITES**—Tooth-colored fillings can be used to fill new cavities or replace old, dark amalgam fillings. No more darkened molars or silver teeth. When composites are used to fill your teeth, no one will know that you ever had a cavity.

■ **SHAPING**—The enamel of your own teeth can be contoured to improve their shape and look. This technique is often used on teeth that are crowded or otherwise not spaced evenly. It can also be used to contour long teeth into more attractive shapes and lengths.

Modern dental technology has given us the solutions to most cosmetic problems. Almost anyone who wants a more beautiful, but still natural-looking, smile can benefit from the services we offer. Why wait another day when a bright, impressive smile is just a phone call away? Call us at **(330) 492-7889** to find out how we can enhance your smile.



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

# Blood and gums

You're happily brushing away. You're about to rinse your brush when you notice the reddish hue in the bristles. You look down and see blood in the sink as well. What's going on?

While bleeding gums can be a little frightening, the cause of the problem can usually be reversed if treated quickly.

Gingivitis, which causes gums to become puffy, tender, and to bleed, can be a symptom of periodontal disease or vitamin C deficiency.

Although vitamin C deficiency is an unlikely cause, about 15 percent of Americans do suffer from low vitamin C. In addition to gingivitis, symptoms of low C include dry, scaly skin, hair that is dry and splits, nosebleeds, swollen joints, anemia, and lowered resistance to infection. Those suffering from vitamin C deficiency may be prescribed vitamins and encouraged to eat a diet high in fruits and vegetables containing this essential vitamin. Good sources include citrus fruits, broccoli, cauliflower, blueberries, cranberries, and juices.

Periodontal disease is far more common than vitamin C deficiency, affecting 75 percent or more of the population. In the early stages, periodontal disease can often be cured. Gingivitis is one of the first signs of periodontal disease, and it is a warning that the gums need more attention. A first step to take is to put more effort into oral hygiene. This means brushing after each meal and flossing daily. Professional dental care is also a must. Untreated, gingivitis can lead to periodontitis, which causes the pockets between the gums and teeth to deepen and teeth to loosen. Periodontal disease is the number-one cause of tooth loss.

Other causes of gingivitis include certain medications, pregnancy, and some systemic diseases, such as diabetes. Brushing too hard and eating certain foods that are hard on gums can also lead to bleeding.

Your dentist is the gatekeeper for health problems that begin in the mouth. Bleeding gums should not be ignored. If you notice pinkish-red in your toothbrush, step up your home-care routine, but also seek professional help to find the root cause of the problem.



## FOODS THAT FIGHT DECAY

Most people know that certain foods are less damaging to your teeth than others, but there are also foods that can be beneficial. Certain fruits and vegetables and dairy foods can have beneficial effects.

Some of the best foods for teeth are also the noisiest to eat. These include raw foods that are known for going "crunch." Perhaps the most famous of these are apples, which are well-known for their ability to help cleanse the mouth. Carrots and celery work in a similar fashion, and when eaten regularly, they may even help to lighten stains and brighten your smile. Raw foods also stimulate the salivary glands to help wash away food debris found on teeth.

Foods that contain calcium—such as yogurt and cheeses—

are known for helping children to grow strong teeth, but dairy foods are good for your teeth your whole life through. Cheese, in particular, contains nutrients that can interfere with plaque formation. In addition, the texture of some cheeses can help increase saliva production.

When choosing the occasional sweet, chocolate, although it contains sugar, can be less detrimental than other treats because it melts away rather than sticking to teeth.

Improving your dental health isn't simply a matter of avoiding foods that are sugar-laden and sticky. Rather, choosing foods that are good for your teeth can mean enjoying better dental health and a healthier diet.



## Do adults need fluoride?

Many adults believe their need for fluoride ended when all their permanent teeth erupted, but that's not the case. Adults, especially those who didn't receive adequate fluoride as children, are still in need of fluoride to help prevent decay as adults.

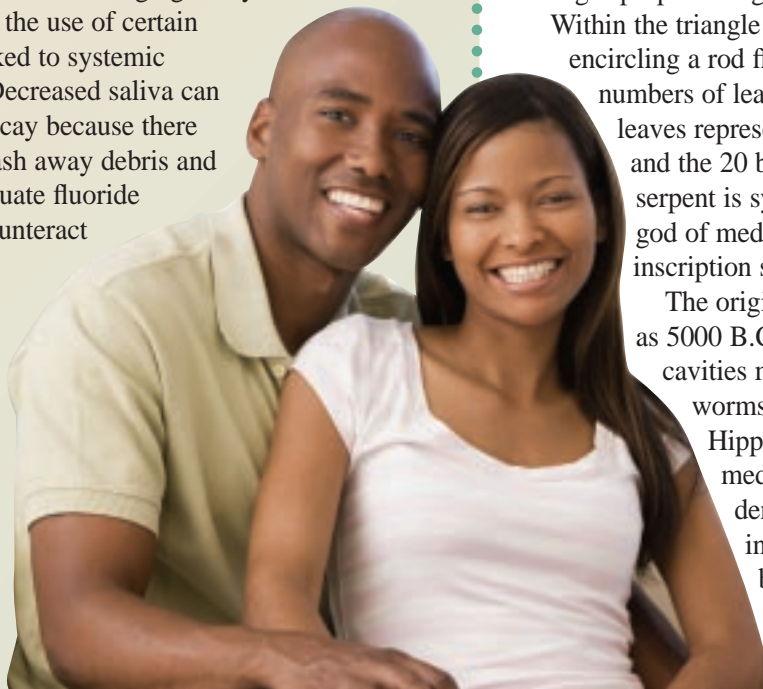
Fluoride helps prevent cavities in two ways. First, it affects the enamel of the teeth, helping to interfere with the decay process. Using fluoride on the teeth daily in a toothpaste or rinse, coupled with fluoride treatments as recommended by a dentist, can aid in stopping decay and help the enamel of the teeth better resist future cavities.

In addition, there are positive systemic responses to fluoride. When fluoride enters the body, it becomes part of bodily fluids, such as saliva, and builds up to continually bathe the surface of the teeth and provide further resistance to acid attacks that cause decay.

Aside from fighting decay on the biting surfaces of teeth, where it often starts, fluoride can also help prevent problems near the gum line. Adults who often experience gum recession that exposes the roots of the teeth may be subject to root decay. The chances of suffering from root decay increase with age. However, once fluoride has become part of the tooth, it can diminish the chances of root decay.

Another dental problem connected to aging is dry mouth, which can result from the use of certain medications and has been linked to systemic conditions such as diabetes. Decreased saliva can mean increased chances of decay because there isn't enough saliva to help wash away debris and cavity-causing bacteria. Adequate fluoride throughout life can help to counteract problems such as these and reduce chances of decay.

More and more Americans are smiling well into their golden years because they are able to keep their own teeth. Fluoride—for both children and adults—has been a big reason why.



## THE MEANING BEHIND THE SEAL

The symbol of the American Dental Association was chosen in 1965, but parts of the insignia date back to the earliest dental association in the United States, and even to the ancient Greeks.

Each piece of the symbol has meaning that directly links it to the dental profession. The outer part of the design uses a triangle entwined with a circle. The triangle is the Greek letter delta, which stands for dentistry, while the circle is the Greek "O," which stands for odont, or tooth.

In 1897, what was then called the National Association of Dental Faculties decided that lilac would be the official color of the profession. The shading within the triangle and circle of the design uses this color, as do dental schools and other dental emblems and banners. The letter "O" is generally gold, and the triangle is black. The rod is gold, and the figures are outlined in black to delineate them from the light-purple background.

Within the triangle and circle is the figure of a serpent encircling a rod flanked by leaves and berries. The numbers of leaves and berries are significant; the 32 leaves represent the number of permanent teeth, and the 20 berries represent the first teeth. The serpent is symbolic of Aesculapius, the Greek god of medicine. In the bottom of the "O," the inscription simply reads DENTISTRY.

The origins of dentistry are ancient. As early as 5000 B.C., evidence from Sumeria notes that cavities may have been the result of tooth worms. Later, between 500 and 300 B.C., Hippocrates (considered the father of medicine) and Aristotle wrote about dentistry. It seems fitting that the dental insignia should include symbols dating back to man's earliest attempts to cure dental caries.

## GOOD EATING—even with dentures

A denture that doesn't fit right or look natural can be a detriment to quality of life and even affect self-esteem. There are people who avoid certain foods and social situations because of discomfort over their dentures.

Good nutrition is important to everyone's health, and an ill-fitting denture can interfere with proper nutrition by causing the wearer to avoid certain foods. But food isn't only about nutrition. There's a pleasure in eating and social satisfaction in enjoying good food while chatting with family and friends. Many social situations include or even revolve around food. The denture wearer who is uncomfortable eating around others may shun such occasions, robbing him or her of social engagement and lowering self-confidence.

A better-fitting, -looking, and -functioning denture can change this scenario. Denture options, including partial plates and implants, can replace dentures that don't fit well or don't appear natural.

Denture wearers shouldn't resign themselves to a life of isolation. Eating, talking, and overall quality of life can be improved with replacements for natural teeth that look, feel, and function more like your own.

**Catherine L. Forster, D.D.S., Inc.**  
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## WANT TO LOOK YOUNGER?

### CHANGE YOUR SMILE

Your smile may have more of an effect on those you meet than any other characteristic of your appearance. If your smile has telltale signs of aging, all your efforts to stay trim and young-looking could be sabotaged. Signs of aging that generally affect teeth include staining, gum recession, and the dark appearance of amalgam fillings when you laugh or smile. Fortunately, cosmetic dental techniques can often remedy some of the signs of aging and bring back your beautiful smile.

### WHITER AND BRIGHTER!

Aging can cause teeth to darken. Because enamel is porous, it absorbs stains from food, beverages, and tobacco. Teeth may appear yellow, dull, or

discolored. A variety of whitening methods are available to lighten teeth and restore some of their youthful brilliance.

### LONG IN THE TOOTH?

With age, gums tend to recede. Gum recession not only makes you look older, it can also make your teeth appear misaligned and less attractive. Recontouring is a cosmetic dental procedure that can be used to change the gum line to create a more youthful-looking smile.

### OUT OF THE DARK

Amalgam fillings that may become more obvious when you laugh can give away your age. Newer restoration materials that are tooth-colored and natural-looking won't give you away. Consider replacing those older restorations with more attractive composites.

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### Office Hours

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

**Appointment and Emergency  
Phone: (330) 492-7889  
Web site:**

**[www.cantonsmiles.com](http://www.cantonsmiles.com)**



## Use your insurance benefits...BEFORE the year runs out!

Health-care benefits that include dental coverage aren't always used up during the year. When autumn arrives, many people find themselves with benefits left over and December 31 quickly approaching. For those who have health-care accounts (funds that collect pretax dollars to cover deductibles and elective services), there may be money left that can't be carried over into the next year.

Don't lose out on the benefits you have coming to you! Many insurance plans

operate on a calendar year (January to December). If you do not utilize your benefits within the year, they disappear forever as of the end of December.

Potential losses can range from \$750 to \$2,500, depending on your type of insurance. And these benefits were paid for by you—either directly or through salary deductions or by putting away pretax dollars.

Care that you need now shouldn't be put off until "after the holidays,"

especially when you have benefits from this year to utilize. Should you need treatment, your final opportunity to maximize use of your insurance is fast approaching. Insurance benefits represent an investment by you or your employer. If you're entitled to them, don't miss out! Feel free to call our office for additional information about how you can use, rather than lose, your insurance benefits!