



DENTAL HEALTH LETTER

Produced for the
patients of
Catherine L.
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What does philosophy have to do with teeth?

My philosophy in a nutshell is **prevention**. My goal is to help my patients keep their teeth all of their lives, if possible, in maximum comfort, function, health, and esthetics, and to accomplish this appropriately for each individual.

Prevention is a catchy theme these days. What the philosophy of prevention has to do with teeth is that it determines the treatment options that I present to you when you are trying to decide how to treat a particular problem. My philosophy of prevention also assures each patient that if and when I see early signs of disease, I not only inform you of them but offer any available solutions modern dentistry has to offer.

The following examples might help me explain: A patient comes to me with a broken tooth. (There could be many variables with a broken tooth, but let's assume it is broken above the gum line, not into the nerve, and about half of the tooth is missing.) This person would be informed of **all** the different treatment options. If my philosophy was based on money, I might recommend the cheapest/fastest alternative of having the tooth removed. If my philosophy was based on patchwork, I might recommend an oversized filling that may not last. Since my philosophy is based on helping people keep their teeth, I might suggest covering the tooth with a crown (cap) to protect it so the tooth will last.

Next, the patient's philosophy enters into the decision. **The final decision on treatment is entirely up to each patient.** Many factors enter into the patient's decision: time, fee, and, most of all, their philosophy of how important it is for them to keep their teeth.

My job is solely to inform patients of various treatment options and make recommendations according to what I would want done in my mouth or in the mouths of my family.

I do not wait for someone to come to me with a broken tooth if I could have helped them prevent it. I believe in finding and dealing with any problems that occur **BEFORE** you are forced to by pain or broken, cracked, or loose teeth. I see too many people who

truly suffer from pain and swelling or require root canal or gum surgery that may have been **prevented**. Once a week, we see someone who is all set to go on vacation, and a tooth falls apart. We have also seen numerous people who retire, lose their incomes **and** dental insurance, and then begin to experience serious problems in their mouths. Sadly, I have even seen those people in their late 80s and early 90s+, who never had prevention, require multiple extractions when they experience problems because they simply lose access to preventive dental care due to various health problems.

Unfortunately as we age, our teeth, mouths, and bodies change; often we are not as resilient as we used to be. That is why I believe in re-evaluating your dental health every three to five years. And for those of you who have not had a charting update in a while, if you want your teeth to last as long as you do, it may be time for one. I would then make you aware of immediate concerns, if any, as well as future and long-term considerations of prevention. I will also outline a plan for you, if necessary, to help you **keep** your teeth healthy.

Since I live in reality, I am aware that not everyone wants prevention. Some do not want to spend the time, others do not want to spend the money, some do not have the money, some are too fearful, and others just don't place a high priority on keeping their teeth.

But I cannot judge a person who sits in my dental chair. I cannot look at that person and say he/she looks like they cannot afford the best treatment (preventive), so I'll only discuss the cheapest treatment option. I have to offer each patient the best and see if it is compatible with their situation.

I will not take it personally if you do not have treatment that I recommend. Therefore, so I can sleep well at night, I must inform each and every person of the same treatment I would choose for myself or recommend for my family.

Let's discuss your concerns and questions. Please, let me know what you are thinking!

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

Briefcase? *Check.* Cell phone? *Check.* Toothbrush? *Check.*

Studies have shown that the corporate environment is a place where first impressions count, and a clean, attractive smile is a major part of the overall presentation you make. According to researchers, smiles are noticed more often than clothing or hair styles. However, teeth that begin the day looking great may not be as attractive by 2:00 p.m.

Coffee, soda, lunch, and cigarette smoking will all affect the cleanliness of your mouth as your workday wears on. Fewer than half of us brush our teeth at all during the workday. Top that off with the fact that most of us brush for less than 30 seconds each morning and night, and you have a recipe for a less-than-lovely smile.

If you don't bring a toothbrush to work, you can't use it. That means that by having a toothbrush handy—in your desk drawer or briefcase, for instance—you are more likely to brush after lunch or after the doughnut you enjoyed at the morning board meeting. Putting a note on your computer to remind you to brush after lunch can't hurt either.

In addition to keeping your breath fresh by brushing during the day, you'll be fighting bacteria at the best possible time—right after you eat, when they are most active. Be sure to brush long enough to do a thorough job. You'll be battling gum disease, tooth decay, and bad breath all at once. We think you'll notice a difference, and your coworkers will, too.



Baby those pearly whites



Because baby teeth fall out and are replaced by adult teeth by the time most children reach their teen years, many parents don't worry about caring for them properly. This is a mistake for many reasons.

First, good habits are developed at young ages, so teaching your child good home care of his or her teeth sets him or her on a course for a lifetime of good dental health. Second, baby teeth pave the way for adult teeth. Baby teeth that are healthy allow adult teeth the room to come in straight. Healthy teeth also aid your child in learning to speak correctly, and attractive teeth will boost a child's self-esteem. First teeth are also necessary for eating and drinking. Good nutrition is often linked to healthy first teeth.

It's easy to see why it's important to take special care of your child's baby teeth. Begin cleaning your child's teeth with a damp washcloth as soon as they come in. Start your child off on the right path for good dental hygiene in the future.



BABY TEETH MAY HOLD CLUES TO CHRONIC DISEASES

Some researchers may have discovered a link between baby teeth and asthma. Because the two top teeth develop before the child is born, they can be examined for elements and minerals the baby ingested while still in the womb. The presence of asthma in a child has been linked to a lack of selenium and iron while the baby is still developing. Researchers are collecting baby teeth for analysis in hopes of finding further clues as to whether supplements taken during pregnancy may help prevent the development of childhood asthma.



Be alert to the signs of TMD

TMMD is a painful disorder of the jaw that for many years was called TMJ. The letters TMD stand for “Temporomandibular Disorder,” but most sufferers will tell you that TMD means pain. That pain may be found in the jaw, head, and neck and can range from a mild annoyance to nearly debilitating discomfort.

You should know the signs of TMD so that you will be prepared to seek a diagnosis and treatment should the problem affect you or a loved one. Common symptoms of TMD include:

- Pain in the jaw and face, or a tight feeling in the same area; difficulty

opening your mouth; or the jaw moving to one side when the mouth is opened.

- Clicking of the jaw. Restrictions in opening the mouth.
- Headaches in one or both temples upon waking.
- Pain may also be present in and around the ears. Ear pain may occur during chewing, there may be a clogged sensation in the ears, or they may ring.

Any of these symptoms could indicate a TMD or other problem. Do not ignore pain or discomfort in this area. Seek professional diagnosis and treatment.



BE TRUE TO YOUR TEETH

1. You increase your chances of tooth decay if you snack

- ___ a. only before bed
- ___ b. often
- ___ c. only on fresh fruit

2. The first toothbrushes were used in

- ___ a. Italy
- ___ b. America
- ___ c. China

3. A complete set of permanent teeth consists of

- ___ a. 36 teeth
- ___ b. 32 teeth
- ___ c. all your teeth

4. The hardest part of the human body is

- ___ a. the elbow
- ___ b. tooth enamel
- ___ c. the core of a tooth

5. The first false teeth were made of

- ___ a. wood
- ___ b. ivory
- ___ c. animal teeth

1. B. The more often you snack, the more likely you are to experience decay.
2. C. The first bristled toothbrushes were found in China in about 1500 A.D.
3. B. A full set of teeth, including 4 wisdom teeth, totals 32 teeth.
4. B. Tooth enamel is harder than any other body part.
5. C. The Etruscans made dentures from the teeth of some mammals as early as 700 B.C.

ANSWERS:

OLD AGE IS NO TIME TO IGNORE YOUR DENTAL HEALTH

Seniors have special dental problems. Sometimes these are related to medications they are taking, but other times they are simply a result of aging. Whatever the cause, these problems should not be ignored, but should be given the proper professional attention and necessary home care to resolve them.

Dry mouth is one problem that is often related to medications. Many patients try to remedy this problem by sucking on hard candies to stimulate saliva production. Unfortunately, the sugar in the candy also causes bacteria to be more active, resulting in decay. It's better to sip cool water to keep the mouth hydrated.

As teeth age, gums recede, leaving the roots of the teeth more susceptible

to cavities. This is one reason that good oral hygiene continues to be necessary as we age. Fluoridated water or over-the-counter fluoride rinses will still protect teeth, and brushing and flossing should be practiced daily. Even patients with full dentures should cleanse their mouths daily and seek professional care on a regular basis, including oral-cancer examinations.

Changes in taste are not necessarily normal signs of aging. They may be related to medication or another problem and should be reported to a health professional.

You owe it to yourself to keep your mouth as healthy as possible—no matter your age. With care and good dental hygiene, you can keep your teeth healthy throughout your golden years.



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Here's your dental newsletter!

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Registration form for Great Strides

We are asking for your help in making Great Strides! On Saturday, May 1, 2004, 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.

Corporate Sponsorship: There is a variety of levels at which you and/or your organization may wish to become a sponsor, including:

Site Sponsor \$5,000 donation

After-Walk Party Sponsor \$1,000 donation

Halfway Sponsor \$500 donation

Start/Finish Sponsor \$300 donation

Kilometer Marker \$150 donation

Personal Donation: \$500, \$250, \$100, \$50, \$25, other \$ _____

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!

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! 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.

Name _____

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Here's the latest photo...



Jennifer, 5, and Emily, 7

For as little as \$6, you can give a gift and receive a gift!

We have adorable bean-bag toys available at our office.

With a \$6 donation, you can choose from patriotic teddy bears, bunnies, fun chicks in eggs, and other cute critters!

All donations will go to support the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. Stop by our office and pick up yours today!

Please mail or fax this form to:

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The information included in this newsletter is not intended as a substitute for dental advice.

For your specific information, be sure to consult our office.