

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

Spring 2010



# DENTAL HEALTH LETTER

## Oral conscious sedation

### What is oral conscious sedation?

Oral conscious sedation is a wonderful option for patients who need more than just local anesthesia, but don't need or want IV sedation or general anesthesia. It allows many people to be **comfortably sedated through the dental visit**; all they need to do is take a small pill.

Oral conscious sedation is modern dentistry that lets even the most high-fear patient have a **relaxing and comfortable dental visit**. Since the patient is comfortable, Dr. Forster is often able to accomplish the work of several appointments in just one. There are a number of conscious-sedation techniques, but they all have certain things in common. While the goal of general anesthesia is for the patient to sleep, in dentistry it is much more common to use oral conscious sedation; the patient is sedated and comfortable, yet still awake. When Dr. Forster uses conscious oral sedation, you don't really fall asleep, even though sometimes it feels like you did. That's because sedation feels so relaxing and peaceful that the patient doesn't even notice the passing of time. Many of the medications used in oral conscious sedation have an amnesiac effect as well, leaving patients with little or no memory of their dental appointment, and further adding to the feeling that the patient was asleep.

### Is oral conscious sedation for me?

Oral conscious sedation is wonderful and **incredibly effective** for most healthy adults. For many, it is the answer they have been looking for all their lives. Discuss sedation with Dr. Forster if **any of the following sound like you...**

- You are uncomfortable in the dentist's office.
- You are too scared to even call the dentist and make an appointment.
- You can't stand the smell and sounds of the dentist's office.
- You are looking for a way to have the work of several appointments done in just one or two, i.e., you are interested in saving time.
- You are delaying treatment you know you need.
- You are in pain when you eat, but too anxious about the dentist to take care of it.
- You are unable to find a dentist that you feel you can trust.
- You have trouble getting numb—the anesthetic doesn't seem to work on you.
- You are afraid to smile.
- You are concerned about how many dental appointments you know you'll need.
- You remember bad experiences with a dentist in your past.
- You have sensitive teeth.
- You have a strong gag reflex, especially when the dentist is working in your mouth.
- You are afraid of needles.

### What can I expect from oral conscious sedation?

There are many different medications and sedation techniques, so it is best to **get specifics from Dr. Forster**. Generally, you will be given a prescription for a pill to take the night before your appointment. Since this is sedative medication, you will need a companion to drive you to the appointment. Once you arrive, Dr. Forster will begin monitoring your vital signs, including heart rate and blood pressure, to make sure you are completely safe throughout the procedure. She will then assess your level of sedation and ask how you feel. In some circumstances, Dr. Forster will use more medication, depending on your level of sedation. **The dentistry will all be performed while you are relaxed and totally comfortable**. When it is safe for you to travel, your companion will take you home, and then you will rest comfortably for the rest of the day.

### Is oral conscious sedation safe?

While all methods of sedation are very safe, the history of oral conscious sedation has been **especially safe as well as very effective**. Dr. Forster uses very common medications that are extremely safe and widely prescribed. She and her whole dental team are **highly trained** in safety and emergency procedures, making this dental office one of the safest places you can be! You'll love your new healthy smile. **Call us today!**

## OFFICE STAFF

**Appointment Coordinators:**  
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Susan Fleming

**Dental Assistants/  
EFDAs:**  
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Jeanne Bolen

**Dental Assistant:**  
Holly Stark

**Registered Dental Hygienists:**  
Terri Moran  
Beth Sobitz  
Wendy Piero

# You're not finished until you FLOSS

Flossing plays an important role in daily oral hygiene for a number of reasons. Careful flossing reaches the areas between teeth to remove debris, plaque, and bacteria that lodge there. The thin nylon filament of which floss is made is ideal for hard-to-clean spots that toothbrush bristles cannot reach.

Proper flossing means wrapping the filament around each tooth and working it in an up-and-down motion as it hugs the tooth. This action removes not only tiny bits of food that the toothbrush cannot, it also tackles bacteria that congregate there, harden, and become crusty plaque. When these bacteria aren't removed and plaque forms, it can cause the gums to become inflamed and bleed, resulting in gingivitis—the first stage of gum disease. Untreated, gum disease can lead to damage to the supporting bone and eventually to tooth loss.

Prevention of gum disease isn't the only reason to make flossing part of your daily oral-hygiene routine. Bacteria that hide between teeth can cause interproximal decay, which can affect more than one tooth at a time.

In addition to helping prevent gum disease and cavities, flossing removes bacteria and leftover bits of food that can cause bad breath. Diabetics and those afflicted with heart disease have special reasons to floss. Regularly removing bacteria by flossing can reduce the risk of endocarditis—which can cause the heart to become inflamed. Diabetics, because they heal more slowly, should be sure to floss scrupulously.

## Ways to get the job done

Some people find it difficult to floss. It may be because their teeth are very close together or they gag easily. Fortunately, there are a number of different flossing implements—both long- and short-handled—that can be used to make flossing easier. Ask us to recommend a type that will work for you.



## ACE YOUR INTERVIEW WITH A CONFIDENT SMILE

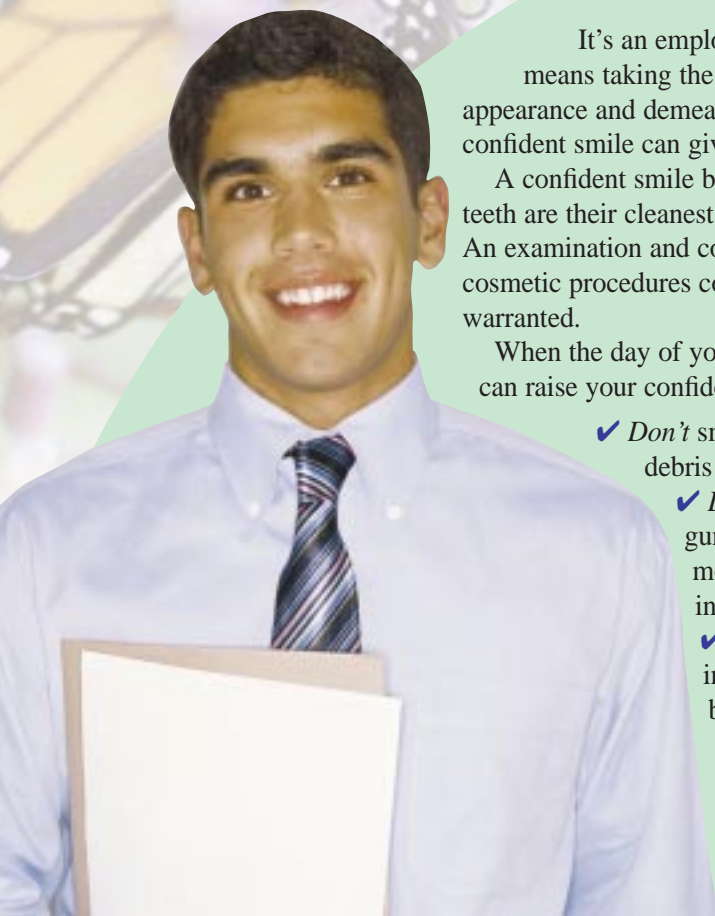
It's an employer's market, and increasing your chances of meriting employment means taking the extra steps that can give you an edge in the interview chair. Both your appearance and demeanor will weigh heavily on your overall interview score, and a radiant and confident smile can give you a tremendous boost.

A confident smile begins with a visit to your dentist. A professional cleaning to be sure your teeth are their cleanest is step one, but your interview preparation shouldn't necessarily stop there. An examination and consultation can determine what restorations need to be performed, what cosmetic procedures could improve your smile, or whether orthodontic treatment might be warranted.

When the day of your interview arrives, preparation is key. Here are a few do's and don'ts that can raise your confidence level and maybe your chances of receiving that coveted job offer:

- ✓ *Don't* smoke or eat just prior to your interview. Both can affect your breath, and food debris could mar your smile.
- ✓ *Don't* pop in a stick of gum on your way to meet your interviewer. Chewing gum could be construed as rude, and it calls unnecessary attention to your mouth. If halitosis is a concern, have a sugarless mint before you arrive at the interview site.
- ✓ *Do* pay added attention to your oral hygiene before leaving for the interview. Be extra scrupulous when you brush, and don't forget to floss between teeth.

A smile you're happy to flash can give your self-esteem a significant boost, translating into confidence that can have a marked effect on an interviewer's initial impression of you. It might be just the edge you need to secure the position you want.



# SPECIAL PATIENTS

## *Scleroderma and dental health*

Scleroderma—an autoimmune disease related to lupus and rheumatoid arthritis that causes the skin to thicken and harden—may affect more than 200,000 Americans in some form.

Patients who live with the effects of scleroderma need special dental attention for a number of reasons. Dry mouth, tooth erosion, and loosened teeth may all plague scleroderma patients. The situation may be compounded by difficulty opening the mouth due to tightening of the skin on the face, which can make good oral hygiene more difficult to achieve.

Tooth erosion in scleroderma patients is often due to GERD (gastroesophageal reflux disease), which allows stomach acid to back up in the food pipe and erode tooth enamel. Likewise, xerostomia (dry mouth), which is sometimes a side effect of medication or caused by damage to the salivary gland, might be a problem because the scarcity of decay-fighting saliva can enable bacteria to gain a foothold.

Although the narrowing of the mouth opening may make daily home care more difficult, it is essential. Dentists can help scleroderma patients find brushing and flossing devices to make these tasks easier. Facial exercises may also be prescribed to increase flexibility. Sipping plain water throughout the day may relieve the effects of dry mouth. Saliva substitutes and medications can also work to keep the mouth lubricated. Toothpastes that help keep enamel hard and fluoride rinses that can deter decay are sometimes recommended.

All these steps to resist the dental effects of scleroderma require a patient to work closely with his or her dentist. A customized schedule of cleanings and checkups can help scleroderma patients get on the road to good dental health.

## Is gum good for your teeth?

What could chewing gum do for your teeth? Ward off decay. Alleviate bad breath. Take away sinus pressure and pain. Think we're kidding? Sugarless gum can have all these positive effects when chewed right after a meal.

Here's how it works: Whenever you chew gum, you stimulate the flow of saliva in your mouth. Excess saliva helps to wash away debris and bacteria found on your teeth. Saliva is also able to neutralize the acid produced by bacteria. This acid is chiefly responsible for decay. In addition, the chewing movement of the jaws releases pressure in the ears and sinuses.

Pop in a piece of gum soon after eating, when bacteria are most active. Shortly after you eat, bacteria begin to feed on the food debris left on your teeth. As they consume, they also produce acids which damage tooth enamel. Chewing gum during this crucial juncture can help to discourage bacterial activity and decrease the chances of decay. However, it's important to choose sugarless gum. Gum that contains sugar will only defeat the purpose because bacteria will consume the sugar from the gum, increasing their activity.

## Cavities? Who, me?

Does that statement jar your thinking? While it's true that those under the age of 21 are at high risk for cavities, it's also true that once we reach age 40, our risk of cavities begins to climb once again.

The primary reason for this is because the roots of the teeth are exposed by gum recession. The roots of the teeth are more penetrable than other tooth surfaces and more prone to decay. But that isn't the only reason cavity risk increases. Several contributing factors can make the threat of decay more likely.

Dry mouth, which grows more common with age, robs the mouth of saliva, which is one of the first defenses against bacteria that cause decay. Drinking plenty of water and chewing sugar-free gum can help increase saliva production and fight decay. Dry mouth is especially common among diabetics and those who have been prescribed certain medications.

Your dental-health history is a good indicator of your likelihood of suffering dental problems as you pass middle age. Those who have lost teeth to decay, suffered cavities in the last few years, had extensive dental work such as crowns or bridges, or who have a partial denture are at higher risk for decay. Patients with a number of old fillings may find that as these restorations break down, they can crack, leaving openings for bacteria.

Fortunately, there are steps patients can take to reduce their chances of developing dental caries. Brushing at least twice daily, for at least two minutes each time, and flossing once per day will help ward off decay, as will having cleanings and checkups on the schedule recommended for you by your dentist. Using a fluoride rinse can offer even more protection.

Diet plays a crucial role in cavity development throughout your lifetime. A diet low in sugar and carbohydrates can be beneficial, but *how often* you eat can be as important as *what* you eat. Snacking often between meals can increase the possibility of developing decay, so keep snacks to a minimum. Choose healthy foods, such as raw fruits and vegetables, when you must snack.



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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, 2010, 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:

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Our regular hours are  
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**Jennifer  
& Emily**