



# DENTAL HEALTH LETTER

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

Summer 2007

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## Oral sedation

Oral 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.

### What is oral sedation?

Oral sedation is a **method of conscious sedation** in which **Dr. Catherine Forster**, a general dentist, uses pills to sedate a patient. Most healthy adults are good candidates for oral sedation. For some, comfortable dentistry is as simple as taking one small pill.



### What is conscious sedation?

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 conscious sedation; the patient is sedated and comfortable, yet still awake. When Dr. Forster uses conscious 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 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 sedation for me?

Oral 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.
- 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.

*(continued on back page)*

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

## Don't skip that checkup

Sometimes, when things are going well with your teeth, and your life is really busy, you may start to think: "Hey, I can skip this checkup and make do with just one this year." However, it's never a good idea to just skip a checkup.

Here are some good reasons to make your dental cleaning and oral health check a priority:

- 1. Prevention**—When your teeth are cleaned regularly, you're less likely to have cavities or develop periodontal disease. That means you're more likely to keep your teeth for life...and, if any problems do develop, we'll catch them early before they become more difficult to treat.
- 2. Oral-cancer detection**—Whether you're at increased risk for oral cancer or not, you should know that this disease can often be cured when it's found early. An oral-cancer examination is done during every cleaning and checkup at our office.
- 3. Take advantage of your insurance benefits**—If you have dental insurance, your biannual visits for preventive care are usually covered. Make sure you're getting all the benefits you and your employer are paying for.
- 4. Better overall health**—Oral health is tied to overall health in ways researchers are only beginning to understand. Strokes and heart attacks have both been linked to the presence of periodontal disease, so keeping your mouth healthy could be better for your overall health as well.
- 5. To have the smile you want**—Clean teeth and fresh breath are attractive attributes. White, straight teeth are considered a mark of beauty. If you're not quite happy with the look of your smile, talk to us about ways to improve it at your next checkup.

## What's good for your teeth...and gums?

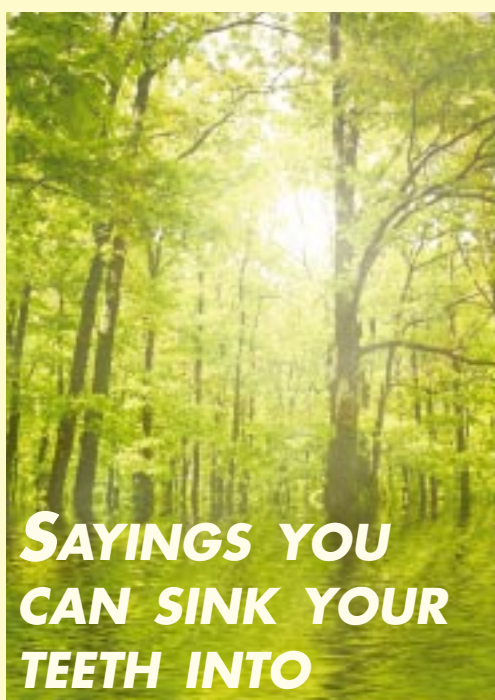
Candy bad, fruit good. Sounds rather primitive, but it is how many of us think with regard to eating for a healthy mouth. The truth is, good nutrition may do more than just stave off cavities. Research has shown that certain nutrients can decrease your chances of developing periodontal disease as well.

The researchers looked at men and women with low calcium intakes. They discovered that those who ingested less than 500 milligrams of calcium per day were much more susceptible to periodontal disease. It's believed that the link between calcium and the development of healthy bones is involved in this finding, since the alveolar bone supports teeth in the jaw.

Similar research was done for vitamin C intake. The research showed that those who ingested less than 60 milligrams per day were more likely to suffer from gingivitis. Gingivitis is the first sign of periodontal disease. Patients who have gingivitis exhibit inflammation of the gums and may notice bleeding when they brush and floss. Vitamin C can help the body to repair damaged tissue.

So it's not just a matter of choosing fruit over candy when reaching for a snack. If you want to lower your chances of developing gum disease, consider what improving your nutritional intake could do for you. What's good for your body is also good for your teeth. Let your diet be one of the steps you take to keep your whole self healthier.





## SAYINGS YOU CAN SINK YOUR TEETH INTO

Ever wonder about the origins of some of those “toothy” sayings? Some sayings used every day, such as “armed to the teeth” and “a tooth for a tooth,” have interesting and colorful beginnings. Others are a bit more obvious.

For instance, the saying “*long in the tooth*” has a very practical basis. This saying is related to age. Someone who is “long in the tooth” is an older person. The gums do recede as we age, exposing more of the root, but the origin of this saying comes from assessing the value of a horse. Horses that were long in the tooth were older than they may have appeared.

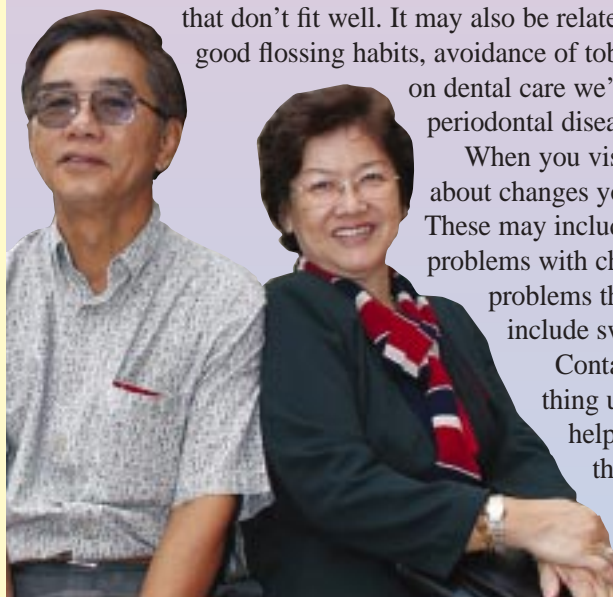
“*Armed to the teeth*” is another toothy saying that dates back to a bygone era. It’s a term that originated in the pirate haven of Port Royal, Jamaica, during the 17th century. Pirates carried a number of weapons into battle, and often put a knife between their teeth for added ammunition. Hence the phrase “armed to the teeth,” meaning bearing maximum weaponry.

“*Tongue in cheek*” is a saying that means not to take whatever was said seriously. It’s believed the term was coined by actors who actually stuck their tongue in their cheek to avoid laughing when they weren’t supposed to. Today, it most often refers to saying something funny, but keeping one’s face serious so as not to spoil the joke.

## The golden years

Growing older is inevitable. Oral-health problems related to age may not be. Although changes occur in the mouth just as they do the rest of the body, by meeting them head-on, most seniors can keep their teeth healthy for life.

Problems associated with age, such as dry mouth, can be alleviated by sipping plain water, which is good for your overall health as well as refreshing for your mouth. Root decay, which occurs as the roots become exposed and teeth seem to grow longer, can also be battled with good home care and regular checkups. Being careful to brush the roots gently and floss well each day can help avoid decay in this area. Fluoride gels or rinses can reduce or prevent root decay. Gum disease has a number of causes, such as the use of tobacco products and partial dentures that don’t fit well. It may also be related to diabetes or anemia. Again, good flossing habits, avoidance of tobacco products, and following up on dental care we’ve recommended can help keep periodontal disease at bay.



When you visit us, it’s important to tell us about changes you’ve noticed in your mouth. These may include tooth sensitivity, loose teeth, problems with chewing, or changes in taste. Other problems that should be reported to us include swelling, bleeding, sores, or lumps.

Contact us whenever you notice anything unusual in your mouth. We can help you take on these problems in the early stages to keep your mouth as healthy as possible all through your golden years.

## What’s causing your BAD BREATH?

Your kids mention it...maybe your spouse...people you work with are too polite to say anything, but you suspect they groan to each other about face-to-face meetings with you. You’ve tried everything—mouthwashes, mints, breath sprays—everything, that is, except asking your dentist. That’s too bad, too, because we can help.

Finding the cause of the problem is essential to solving issues of bad breath. Often, it’s one of the following:

- ✗ tobacco use—including both smoking and chewing tobacco
- ✗ dry mouth—not producing enough saliva to wash away bacteria
- ✗ a health problem—a sinus infection, for instance
- ✗ poor oral care—can result in a buildup of bacteria in the mouth, especially at the back of the tongue
- ✗ gum disease—excessive plaque laden with oral bacteria
- ✗ stomach contents or stomach acid

Some of these problems can be handled with a plan that includes home care and visits to our office on a recommended schedule. If the problem appears to be a medical one, we’ll refer you to a physician who can help. Halitosis isn’t pleasant for anyone, but it affects the person with the bad breath most of all. If you or a loved one has chronic breath problems, let us help you find the cause and the solution. All you have to lose is your bad breath.



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

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## **Oral sedation** *(continued from front page)*

### **What can I expect from oral 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 sedation safe?**

While all methods of sedation are very safe, the history of oral sedation has been **especially safe as well as very effective**. Dr. Forster uses very common medications that are extremely safe and widely prescribed. Your vital signs will be constantly monitored from the moment you arrive at the office through the entire appointment, and until Dr. Forster is certain you are ready to leave. In fact, 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!



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

3455 Whipple Avenue, N.W.

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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)**

