“DEJA VU ALL OVER AGAIN”

You probably thought that Yogi Berra was talking about baseball when he said this memorable quote. Actually he had just finished an appointment with his hygienist and another toothbrushing lesson. Well, here we go again:

1. Floss before brushing
2. Use a small headed soft brush
3. Use a VERY small amount of toothpaste
4. A soft circular stroke is best
5. Start on the biting surfaces
6. Brush twice a day once for 6 minutes
7. Brush your tongue

If you do these things your dental bills will be lower, your mouth healthier and fresher smelling.

WORDS OF WISDOM

If you are yourself at peace, then there is at least some peace in the world. When you share your peace with someone, two of you are peaceful. And so it goes.

Thomas Merton

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INSURANCE MAX

Dental insurance allows many people to receive care that they might have put off. The main limiting factor with dental insurance is the yearly maximum allowed by your insurance. These maximums have become more restrictive over the years. For example, the $600 maximum allowed by MSU has not changed since the policy was first offered. In those years even if inflation only averaged 4%, that $600 now only buys $300 worth of goods.

Because of the shrinking value of the benefit more people run into this insurance limit. We try very hard to keep track of this limitation, but often it is impossible. For example, if you receive specialty dental care in another office, it counts against your max, but we have no way of tracking these costs. It is then very important for you to track your own limits and to make sure that you inform us.

WHITE TEETH

If after brushing or having your teeth cleaned you still think your teeth are not white enough don't brush harder. It will wear your enamel off and actually make your teeth darker. Cleaning only removes surface stain. Internal stain must be professionally bleached out. Ask us about bleaching if you are interested.

GNASHING AND GRINDING OF TEETH

Since biblical times people have ground their teeth as an outlet for emotional distress. We are still doing it. We can cause every thing from sore teeth, muscles and joints to severe head and neck aches and even the inability to open your mouth. Most of these problems are treatable and a common treatment is the bite splint, which is worn at night.
“CATCHY DECAY”

Can you catch the germs that cause tooth decay and gum disease? The latest research shows you can. Parents with a high decay rate can transfer the bacteria that cause tooth decay to their newborns. This risk could be reduced by having the parents reduce their own sugar intake during the pregnancy, improving oral hygiene and seeking regular dental care. All of these efforts reduce the concentration of strep mutans, the bacteria which causes tooth decay. Once the number of bacteria is reduced in the parents, they should be careful to avoid sharing utensils or other items which might transfer the bacteria to the baby.

Still the main factor in determining whether someone will have a high decay rate is frequency of sugar intake. So, as much as possible, cut sugar out of the baby’s diet.

GUM DISEASE IS SNEAKY

One day you think your fine and the next your teeth are loose. What happened? You probably ignored the years of mild symptoms which preceded the loose teeth. These symptoms include bad breath, bleeding gums or pink tooth brush. You probably also ignored some words of advice from us. Whenever we suggest you see a periodontist or shorten the interval between cleaning or anesthetize a certain area to deeply curette under the gum, we are doing this to reduce the chances of you losing your teeth to gum disease.

Most gum disease is treatable. The treatment can either be done here or by a specialist (periodontist) depending on the severity of the case. The treatment is corrective in the sense that once treated it will return if the conditions which caused the disease are allowed to return. The treatment is not curative like having your appendix removed.

Some gum disease is not readily treatable and regardless of the treatment or your improved oral hygiene the teeth continue to loosen. So the best idea is to avoid the problem in the first place, prevent it by flossing and brushing.

LAUGHING GAS

Some people have asked why we don’t use nitrous oxide (laughing gas). It was after all Horace Wells, a dentist, who introduced its use as a surgical anesthetic. When Dr. Wells first demonstrated nitrous oxide 150 years ago this year it had a nearly miraculous effect on surgery. There had been no other way to reduce pain during surgery. Fortunately over the years we have developed more effective methods of pain control.

When nitrous oxide is used in concentrations enough to reduce pain several things have been noted. The amount of oxygen the patient receives is insufficient to guarantee safety. When these concentrations are used, patients often become nauseated during long appointments. Another recent finding is that pregnant health care workers exposed to very low levels of nitrous oxide are more likely to have a spontaneous miscarriage. Considering these difficulties we have decided not to utilize the gas.

SUPERGLUE FIX

If a tooth falls out of a denture and you are out of town or the office is closed, glue it back. Clean and dry off the denture and the tooth. Take the tooth and practice returning it to the denture. Once you feel comfortable that you can replace it easily, then put a very small amount of superglue on the denture and replace the tooth.

Most likely this will not hold for long, but it could get you out of a jam and it won’t harm the denture. As soon as possible return the denture to the office and we will get it repaired properly.

Do NOT try to fix a broken partial or denture.

FIRE OR ICE

When muscles or joints are painful should you use heat or cold. Generally speaking ice is better. This is especially true if the injury just happened. Ask us for more information.

DENTURE HYGIENE

Do: Rinse after meals
Brush daily with mild denture paste
Soak over night in denture bath

Don’t: Scrub with abrasive household cleansers like Comet

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The patient newsletter of
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Dr. Figenshau
Dr. Fahrenbach