Beware of Dog

For people who grind their teeth, a bite splint is a great idea. It prevents wear and tear of the teeth. It comforts muscles. One problem: dogs tend to think it is a chew toy. So, PLEASE keep your bite splint away from your dog. Keep it high and dry because dogs will often jump up on counter tops for it. Also, this goes for dentures, retainers and other appliances you wear in your mouth and remove to clean.

Infected Toothbrushes

Toothbrushes will become contaminated with bacteria from your mouth or other sources. So, to avoid the problem:
- Generally replace brushes every 3 months
- Have 2 brushes and alternate
- Disinfect brushes by soaking in antiseptic mouthwash
- Replace brushes after bacterial illness
- Store brushes in cabinet away from toilet

Cell Phones

Please be aware that sound carries very well in our office. Kindly turn your phone off or to silent. If you must have a telephone conversation, please step outside.

Pacifier or Thumb?

The sucking reflex is normal. Is it better to suck on a thumb or a pacifier? The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry suggests using pacifiers because it is an easier habit to break than thumb sucking. The earlier a sucking habit is stopped, the less chance the habit will lead to orthodontic problems. Certainly, the habit should be discouraged after age 3.

Basal Metabolic Rate (BMR)

BMR is the speed your body burns calories. Muscles burn a lot of calories and increased muscle mass increases BMR. Therefore, to burn more calories, to lose weight and feel healthier, you need to build muscle. The largest muscles in the body are attached to your legs and they are used every day for walking, standing and most other common activities. Strengthening the leg muscles improves vigor, balance and willingness to do more physical activity like climbing stairs instead of using an elevator. One very nice side benefit is that with increased muscle mass you actually burn more calories sleeping than you did with a weaker body.

Tune Out

Children who watch more than 2 hours of television a night are at a higher risk of becoming smokers, being fat, out of shape, diabetic or having high cholesterol. Dr. David Ludwig, director of the obesity program at Children’s Hospital in Boston said TV watching has “serious long-term consequences.”
Juice: The Dark Side

**Science:** Contrary to the healthy image of unsweetened juices, research increasingly links sweet drinks to childhood obesity and high tooth decay rate. Juice is not much better than pop.

**Reason:** Like pop, juice is mostly water and sugar and it doesn’t have the fiber of whole fruit.

**Advice:** Children under 6 months should never have juice and there are no nutritional reasons to give it to kids at all.

**The Future:** Juice and other sweet drinks are replacing milk in the diet of many children. These children are at risk for osteoporosis in later adulthood. The skeleton most easily adds calcium during the growing years. It is like money in the bank. Once middle age is reached, we start drawing that calcium out of the skeleton. If you don’t have enough calcium banked, you are likely to get osteoporosis and possibly sustain spontaneous fractures of the hip and other bones as you age.