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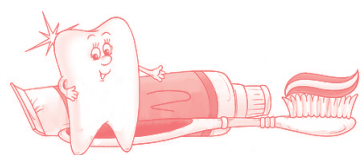
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HELPFUL HINTS, REMINDERS AND NEWS TO KEEP YOU IN SMILES • WINTER 2009-2010



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43% of men and 35% of Caucasians grinding their teeth. In a course I took, the lecturer mentioned a study that indicated when people clench their teeth, the airway opens more, and it has been theorized that possibly, grinding teeth is an attempt by the body to open the airway to gain more oxygen while we sleep.



STRONGER BLEACHING SOLUTIONS DON'T IMPROVE RESULTS: a study out of Brazil showed that increasing the

strength of bleaching solutions did not prolong the effects of bleaching one's teeth, but did confirm an increase in the incidence of post-bleaching tooth sensitivity. The teeth did bleach faster. The ADA used to certify 10% solutions, which is the concentration we use in the office (for political reasons, the ADA no longer certifies bleaching solutions along with various other products). Again, I believe in using bleaching trays at night while one sleeps; it makes no sense to me to use stronger solutions. The end result is the same, maybe slower, but with less risk for tooth

sensitivity. So what's one more night of bleaching?



MERRY CHRISTMAS,

Happy Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Festivus (for those Seinfeld fans), & Happy New Year. Thanks for being a part of the practice. Remember, any insurance benefits unused by 1 January, don't roll over.

"I am still learning." "Trifles make perfection, and perfection is no trifle."

Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti Simoni (1475-1564)



Heart attack research findings presented at the annual conference of the European Society of Human Genetics in May, 2009 suggest a genetic link between periodontal disease and the development of heart disease leading to heart attack. According to the findings, risk of heart attack and development of periodontal disease share an identical gene. A team of researchers at the University of Kiel, Germany found a genetic chromosomal variant located on chromosome 9, that is identical for both periodontal and heart disease. The variant which had previously been identified to be associated with heart attacks, was found to be identical in a group of 151 patients suffering from the most

aggressive, early-onset forms of periodontitis, when compared to a group of 1097 chronic heart disease patients who had already suffered a heart attack. Previous research has shown that periodontal and heart diseases are linked. The new study shows that the risk of developing heart attack and development of periodontal disease share the same gene that can promote chronic inflammation, increased risk of heart disease/heart attack and suggests that periodontal disease should be aggressively treated.



Regularly **DRINKING WHITE WINE COULD BE MORE HARMFUL TO TEETH** than opting for red wine, scientists claim. New research contradicts the commonly held belief that 'staining' red wine

causes more damage to teeth than white. Grapes such as Chardonnay and Pinot Grigio can wear away enamel more quickly than red grapes such as Merlot and Claret, making teeth more sensitive to hot and cold. The study suggests that Riesling wines tend to have the greatest impact, having the lowest pH, but that a 'kinder' tooth choice would be a rich red. Researchers from Johannes Gutenberg University in Germany, examined eight red and white wines from Germany, France, Italy and Spain, and analyzed their effects on extracted adult teeth. The teeth were soaked in both types of wines for 24 hours. The researchers noted a significant loss of calcium and phosphorus from the enamel surface. Reported in the journal *Nutrition Research*, the researchers also warn that excessive brushing immediately after acidic alcohol consumption should be avoided as it could further

harm teeth already structurally weakened from the acidic wine. (That doesn't mean that you shouldn't brush your teeth, but I'd wait a while [a couple of hours] to allow your saliva to start re-mineralization of the decalcified tooth structure. By the way, some of the poorest dental conditions are found in professional wine tasters due to acid erosion.) The researchers noted that eating cheese alongside sipping wine could help counter the acidic effect since cheese is rich in calcium. My own thoughts are that wine does decalcify teeth, but few people bathe in wine for 24 hour periods. However, over time, the decalcification can become cumulative. I may have to try some research of my own on this to see if it is true.



NAME YOUR POISON: MERCURY/BSPHENOL-A?

At the risk of being an alarmist, and also freaking out some of you, I'm unsure where this is all heading. Most of you are aware that amalgam fillings contain mercury, which is a toxic poison. (Remember the Mad Hatter? People who made

hats in the old days used mercury to help shape the hats, and in time many developed mercury poisoning.)

The American Dental Association (ADA) has staunchly defended the use of mercury in amalgam (the silver-looking fillings which contain approximately 50% mercury), claiming that the mercury is "bound" in the filling and not released in any sufficient quantity to cause problems. There is considerable controversy here, and logically it makes sense that if mercury is a poison before it enters the body, and it is a poison after it comes out of the body (and must be disposed as hazardous waste), then why isn't it a poison when it is in the body? In fact the FDA recently (see previous newsletter) changed its position and now states that mercury in fillings "may" cause problems in pregnant woman and children, six and younger. I'm not sure just how political this statement is, but it is interesting nonetheless.

So, let's talk tooth colored, mercury-free fillings. A recent study just was published linking the impact of bisphenol-A, or BPA on the reproductive system of human males. Previous studies have only involved rats or mice.

Bisphenol-A is a component of these fillings as well as being found in many types of plastic (so it is very possible that the presence of BPA, which has been detected in 93% of the U.S. population's urine is more a result of our society's use of plastics rather than being part of dental fillings). Researchers studied workers Chinese factory workers exposed to very high levels of BPA (50 times that of the average U.S. male) and found the sexual health of male workers were four times as likely to suffer from problems such as erectile dysfunction. Apparently BPA is a synthetic version of estrogen. Previous animal studies have linked BPA to infertility, weight gain, early-onset puberty, and diabetes. So, what are your alternatives? Gold is best, but expensive. Porcelain looks good, but is also expensive, and not without its own problems of composition. Years ago, uranium was added to give porcelain a fluorescence similar to that of natural teeth—problem was the restorations emitted radioactivity. It has since been removed from porcelain restorations. Extraction has its own problems, in that you no longer have teeth, thus diet and nutrition suffer (plus, what do you think dentures are made of?). Maintaining dental

health to avoid the need for dental work is the best option. In this case, there needs to be more research studies on the effect of low levels (as opposed to the high levels in this study) of bisphenol-A on the body. I think you have to remember that there are millions of people walking around with mercury fillings, and an equal number with composite plastic fillings—are these people better off than the millions of people walking around without teeth? Unequivocally, the answer is yes.

ULTREO TOOTHBRUSH:

Unfortunately is a victim of the recession. While I thought it a decent power toothbrush and the only ultrasonic toothbrush on the market, it has ceased production. Therefore my only recommendation now is the Oral B/Braun 8000 series toothbrush (not the Triumph or 9000 series model which is more expensive).



FLOSS — IT'S JUST NOT FOR TEETH ANYMORE:

Other uses of Teflon floss (Glide) from This Old House magazine:

1. Cleaning the crevices in

tools. The braided kind works best for this.

2. Hanging pictures. It won't mar painted walls the way picture wire can.
3. Sewing on buttons. (*This must look "good" against navy!*)
4. Sealing plumbing connections. Instead of using Teflon tape, wind floss around the fitting's threads half a dozen turns before screwing it on (*if for some reason you do this, I'd suggest Glide floss over regular floss—it is Teflon coated*).
5. Preventing rope ends from fraying. Wrap the floss around the ends to keep them from raveling.
6. Tying down a car trunk's lid.
7. Replacing a broken shoelace. (*This would really impress on a date!*)
8. Repairing wood. Stretch the floss taut, roll it in glue and then work it into split seams.
9. Cutting cheesecake (*my wife's suggestion*).

Incidentally (pun intended), the director of Pirates of the Caribbean, Gore Verbinski, wanted the cast to not brush, floss, bathe or use deodorant during the filming of the trilogy. "I wanted them to look smelly," he said, in addition to constructing fake, bad-looking overlay teeth for the cast members. Does Workman's Comp cover tooth decay?



DON'T DO DENTAL TREATMENT — GO TO JAIL?

A parent in Florida has been jailed for failure to follow through with suggested dental treatment for her child. The child, age 6, wound up in a hospital with a dental infection after not keeping several dental appointments that were given to the mother for the child. She was arrested for dental neglect. (This should make for an interesting discussion during dinner.)



GRINDING TEETH AND SLEEP APNEA:

A new study done at Baylor College of Medicine found that as many as one in four people with sleep apnea will grind their teeth, compared to one in ten without diagnosed sleep apnea. The data gets even worse when it is split out among ethnic groups, with as many as