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DENTAL WELLNESS* NEWSLETTER



Note from Doc Summertime is here already! When we were youngsters, summer was a time of vacations, fun, venturing from home—a very exciting time. As we get older and responsibilities mount, summer becomes less play and more work. This is why it is so important to discover a life's work that is exciting and satisfying so that life can be challenging and fulfilling all year long. I am happy that I have chosen dentistry as my calling and have the privilege of working with a fine clientele and a talented dental team.
Dr. McBride

FULL DENTURE CARE – A DWINDLING ART

American Dental Association statistics indicate that one third of people in the U.S. have no natural teeth. Most of these people wear complete removable dentures. The TV advertising by mature celebrities for the sticky, gooey denture adhesive products attests to the difficulties many bear in wearing them. Alongside this, the teaching of full denture technology in dental school has been diminishing through the years. I believe that part of the reason for this is that dental implants (metal root replacements) have become vogue for replacing teeth. They can be quite successful, but so can well-made complete removable dentures. Implants may be a solution for some, but for many, especially a large segment of our elderly population, dental implants are not indicated for the following reasons:

- Too little jaw bone structure remaining to accommodate implants without bone grafting, which can be a risky surgical procedure at their stage of life.
- The expense may preclude their consideration.
- Properly executed full denture care in most cases renders implants as an unnecessary procedure.

Many dentists do not offer full denture services, as it is as far removed from conventional dental treatment such as fillings, crowns and bridges as night is from day. Denture treatment has much more room for error, as correct positions of the teeth for esthetics and optimum function can be evasive even for the seasoned denture practitioner. Dentures are hard, unyielding objects placed over sensitive tissues of the mouth that are bounded by muscle attachments that vie to dislodge them during chewing, speaking and swallowing. A major factor in denture treatment is the personality of the denture patient. One patient's success might be another's failure with the same conscientious dentist using similar fabrication techniques. Denture success also relates to the ability of the patient to be "coached," as even new, improved dentures for a long-time denture wearer requires an attitude of commitment not requisite for the conventional dental treatments mentioned.

One important aspect unique to full dentures is that, unlike the more conventional fillings and crowns which are finished when placed, the placement of full dentures is essentially the start of treatment. Even the most successful dentures need several adjustments after the day of placement to allow the soft, sensitive, movable structures of the mouth to accommodate them.

Another reason for their lack of "popularity" with most dentists, is the value accorded them by the dental insurance industry. Their benefit allowance is paltry for the quality of skill, time, care and judgment needed for their success. Since a large majority of dentists are signed on with insurance companies, it is no surprise that most dentists do not provide denture services, or if they do, have their treatment be influenced by the third party.

Proper denture care includes the time necessary for data gathering, taking into consideration the aspects of the remaining jaw structure size, the innate oral dexterity of the patient, their attitudes, exacting fabricating techniques, and time needed for proper adjustments with no time limitations, as each person is unique in all the above categories.

I have been associated with a denture study group mentored by a seasoned practitioner, Dr. J.J. Kovats, who realizes the complexities of full denture care. He has performed no other dental services except full dentures since his graduation from both medical and dental schools. His skill, passionate dedication and experience have been a beacon in guiding top full denture practitioners through the years.

I have been fabricating complete dentures with success since graduation from dental school for even the most orally compromised patients. I enjoy it because each case is a unique challenge, and the value it offers these special, dentally compromised people renders a "high" that is difficult to describe. It is sad for me to see the utilization of dental implants as a substitute for proper full denture care which appears to have become a dwindling art.

TREATMENT SUCCESSES

Linda came to me with several fears, based on difficulty with past dental experiences and was embarrassed to boot. After carefully listening to her problems, trust was gained that allowed me to provide my best and finest denture care. She was extremely happy with the result attested by her ability to chew food comfortably, as well as inspiring her to make other life enhancing improvements.



Linda Before Linda After

Summer '06

Volume 1 Issue 13

Quarterly Quote
"The secret of education is respecting the pupil."
Ralph Waldo Emerson

Inside this issue	
Note from Doc	1
FULL DENTURE CARE – A DWINDLING ART	1
TREATMENT SUCCESSES	1
A SLICE OF HISTORY	2
<i>Importance of Dental X-rays</i>	2
<u>Team News</u>	2
Presentations	2
Seasonal Drawings!	2

* Wellness denotes health, and true health is based upon sound relationships bounded by mutual trust and respect between practitioner, staff and patient. It is an attitude that involves learning and development of common goals for prevention and treatment.



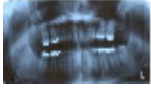
A SLICE OF HISTORY



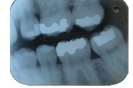
It is known that George Washington was the most athletic and adventurous of all the founding fathers, according to James C. Rees, executive director of the Mount Vernon Estate and Gardens, Washington's home in northern Virginia. "But many people think he was boring and nothing could be further from the truth." Contrary to his grim-faced portrait on the dollar bill, he was a great dancer and horseman. He started losing his teeth in his 20s.

There exist four known sets of Washington's dentures. The dentures are made from gold, ivory, lead, human and animal teeth (horse and donkey teeth were common components). The dentures had springs to help them open and bolts to hold them together.

"The portrait on the dollar bill is not the complete Washington," said anthropologist Jeffrey Schwartz, a forensic anthropologist from the University of Pittsburgh. The set pictured above was made from hippopotamus ivory and gold in 1795 by New York dentist John Greenwood.



Importance of Dental X-rays



Once in a while I am asked, usually by new patients, if dental x-rays are harmful, or they may even request treatment without x-rays. These questions have prompted me to include this section on dental x-rays and why it is vitally important for me to use x-rays for diagnosis and treatment. My hope is that the following information will dispel the fears regarding the usage of dental x-rays.

Even the mention of the word "radiation" conjures up an unpleasant image for most people. We associate it with bombs, cancer, and all manner of other bad things. But there are many beneficial uses of radiation used extensively in the medical and dental professions to diagnose and treat a wide variety of conditions.

X-rays are energy in the form of waves, identical to visible light. In fact, the only difference between light and x-rays is that light doesn't have enough energy to go through your body and x-rays do. Both can make an image on photographic film, so both types of energy are used to make pictures; light makes photographs of the "outside" of objects, x-rays make pictures of the "inside" of objects, including your body.

Typically, most dental patients have "periapical" or "bitewing" radiographs taken. These require patients to hold or bite down on a piece of plastic with X-ray film in the center. Bitewing X-rays typically determine the presence of decay in between teeth, while periapical X-rays show root structure, bone levels-important in the monitoring of periodontal "gum" disease, cysts and abscesses. "Panoramic" type x-rays allow a dentist to see a broad view-the entire structure of your mouth in a single image. These are especially important for a person who has retained their wisdom teeth, as cysts can form around them without symptoms. Advances in x-ray equipment, especially film technology, allows us to get a good x-ray image using much less radiation than was previously required.

How Is Radiation Measured? A unit called a "rem" is used to measure radiation. A rem is a large unit, much like a mile is a large unit of length, so we usually use a millirem (mrem) instead, much as you would measure in inches instead of miles for most purposes. (It takes 1000 mrem to equal one rem.) A typical dental x-ray image exposes you to only about 2 or 3 mrem. The National Council on Radiation Protection (NCRP) says that the average resident of the U.S. receives about 360 mrem every year from background sources. This comes from outer space, radioactive materials in the earth, and small amounts of radioactive material in most foods we consume. Some typical radiation sources : smoke detectors (less than 1 mrem per year), living in a brick house (about 10 mrem per year due to radioactive materials in the masonry), cooking with natural gas (about 10 mrem per year from radon gas in the natural gas supply), reading a book for 3 hours per day (about 1 mrem per year due to small amounts of radioactive materials in the wood used to make the paper), and even from flying in an airplane (about 5 mrem for one cross-country flight because of the increased altitude.) Since your dentist gains valuable information from x-rays to aid you in keeping a healthy mouth, it is also not in your best interest to refuse dental x-rays because of the very small amount of radiation you receive from them.

Team



News

Online Communication is Here!

We are excited about our new online communications system. We are experiencing the following opportunities:

- An email appointment confirmation one month before the scheduled appointment as well as four business days prior to it.
- An opportunity for us to get direct feedback from a satisfaction survey following each appointment. The resulting data will help us implement ways in which to serve you better, as well as improve communication between team members.
- An easy way to refer friends to our practice.

If we don't have your email address, let us know right away by calling the office or emailing us at info@rpmdentistry.com.

Presentations



Our monthly Thursday evening Doc's Talks series continue to get rave reviews. Dr. McBride also did a presentation to a group of chiropractors explaining how a person's bite can be directly related to jaw joint pain and noise, migraine headaches, neck aches, ringing in the ears and vertigo. Our next in-office presentation is Thursday, June 22.



Seasonal

Drawings!



Congratulations Jeanette Poutsma for winning the Spring Basket and to Dawn Kong for winning the Summer Picnic Basket. Be sure to place your name for the colorful Fourth of July Basket!



Please let us know what topics you would like to hear about in upcoming issues.

