

# HILTON DENTAL PRACTICE NEWSLETTER

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## Tooth Wear



**W**elcome to our practice newsletter. Thanks to those of you who have commented on previous newsletters - we are glad you are reading them. We hope to be able to provide you with information on a variety of topics to supplement the advice we give when you visit the practice. As always, we would appreciate feedback from you and don't forget to ask if you have any questions on the articles.

The number of people who have lost all their natural teeth has dropped by 300% in three decades, from 37% in 1968 to 12% in 1998. It has been estimated that by 2008 the figure will have fallen below 10%.

### PRACTICE HOURS

<b>Mon</b>	<b>09.00</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>17.30</b>
<b>Tues</b>	<b>10.00</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>19.00</b>
<b>Wed</b>	<b>09.00</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>17.30</b>
<b>Thur</b>	<b>09.00</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>17.30</b>
<b>Fri</b>	<b>09.00</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>17.00</b>

1 in 4 adults suffer from bad breath on a regular basis. Bad teeth and bad breath are the top turn-offs for women according to a recent survey for a men's magazine.



Denplan

Decay is not the only cause of tooth destruction. Increasingly dentists are spending time restoring teeth that have lost their enamel due to erosion (damage from acid), attrition (tooth against tooth) and abrasion (e.g. vigorous tooth brushing).

Acid erosion has been largely linked to the high consumption of soft drinks, both fruit juice and carbonated drinks. However, erosion is also seen in patients with symptoms of gastric reflux (heartburn) and in patients with eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia. This is due to the highly acidic stomach contents coming into contact with the enamel of the teeth.

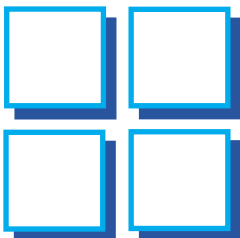
Nocturnal tooth grinding is very common and can be linked to stress and anxiety. It is the tooth to tooth contact that leads to the loss of tooth tissue. It can also lead to tooth mobility, tooth fracture and jaw joint pain.

Often it is a combination of factors which leads to severe tooth wear. When we discover tooth wear in a patient's mouth we will always try to ascertain the exact cause of the loss of the enamel. It is very important to find the cause, so as to try to eliminate it or reduce its effect. This should be done before treatment is begun so that we can get the best long term result with the restorations that are placed. If the cause is acid erosion, we will look at your diet and advise the reduction, or sometimes the complete elimination of carbonated drinks, fruit juices or other acid foods (pickles etc). We may question you about digestive problems and eating patterns (eating a heavy meal shortly before bedtime increases the likelihood of stomach contents being regurgitated into the mouth while asleep - you will not even be aware you have done this!) We may ask if you suffer from stress and look for evidence in the pattern of your tooth wear that you are grinding your teeth. Often patients are unaware they are doing this, sometimes partners have told them that they keep them awake with the noise of their gnashing teeth!!

Tooth brush abrasion tends to be noted at the neck of the teeth and is caused by using too hard a brush with too vigorous a scrubbing action possibly in the presence of acid. Proper tooth brushing instruction from our hygienist, along with an awareness of any sources of acid can eliminate this problem. Any small cavities created can usually be restored with tooth-coloured restorations.

Minor erosion or attrition can usually also be restored with small tooth-coloured restorations. However, when the wear is significantly worse we might build up teeth with large tooth-coloured fillings which reconstruct the tooth shape. Significant erosion may require teeth to be crowned. An example of where I have done this can be seen in the photographs. Photo 1 shows severe tooth wear caused by a combination of acid erosion from diet cola drinks and a history of heartburn (acid reflux). Photo 2 shows the successfully restored smile with 6 anterior crowns and some small tooth-coloured fillings on the less severely affected teeth.

*Continues Over..*



A new study shows that olive oil can give a healthy smile. Studies at the University of Madrid have found that olive oil can help fight tooth decay and also strengthen teeth. Dr Maria Rodriguez said "It works because the oil lowers acidity in the mouth and contains high levels of vitamin A which promotes mineralisation.



So, as you can see, the 21<sup>st</sup> century dentist has a lot at his/her disposal to restore tooth wear. But, ideally we would rather prevent you needing our help.

## Hello/Goodbye

Earlier this year Fiona and Julie moved on to pastures new and we wish them well in their new careers. In their place, we welcome Jane. After a short spell working in Edinburgh, Jane has moved back to the Aberdeen area to be closer to friends and family. Coming to the practice with a wealth of experience Jane has already become integrated into the team.

Britons spent £550million a year on oral care in 2001 - compared to £6 billion on soft drinks, £5.5 billion on confectionery, £4billion on chocolate and £700 million on cosmetics.

## Increasing Hours

Due to an increase in demand for her services, we are increasing Donna's hygienist sessions. As more and more people become aware of the advantages of preventive treatment, Donna has become more popular and her current appointment spaces are booking some time ahead. One of the aims of the practice has always been to avoid lengthy waiting times and because of this popular demand, Donna will be at the practice on a Wednesday in addition to her Monday and Friday sessions. It will then be possible for Moyra's patients to co-ordinated their dental health examination and hygiene visits on the same day.

Over 20% of 3yr old children have severe tooth decay in their front teeth - largely caused by sugary drinks in feeding bottles.

## To Reduce Tooth Wear

- Watch your intake of carbonated drinks/fruit juices. Have them with a meal, this reduces the acid affect. Don't sip drinks over a prolonged period as this increases exposure time of the enamel to the acid.
- Drink with a straw, as this bypasses the teeth.
- Don't ignore heartburn. Get your doctor's advice if persistent. Medication may be required.
- Don't brush your teeth for at least 60 minutes after an acidic drink. Let your saliva do it's natural job and neutralise the acid first. Otherwise you will just scrub the acid into your teeth and exacerbate the acid attack.
- Eating cheese or milk products after acid foods helps counteract their effects. Chewing gum will stimulate saliva flow and neutralise acid also.
- We may provide you with a soft splint to wear at night if we suspect you are grinding. Wearing this may prevent the need for extensive restorative dental work.
- Using an electric toothbrush may be less abrasive than a manual tooth brush.
- Visit your dentist regularly -especially if you have been warned of early signs of tooth wear.

## Reassessment

As recognised Investors in People, we are required to complete a reassessment every three years to show that we are maintaining the required standards. We are pleased to announce that earlier this year we completed our reassessment and were presented with a nice new plaque to hang on the wall of the practice. The standards for Investors in People constantly change and working with Scottish Enterprise, who oversee the assessments, keeps the team on its toes.

2/3 of people who brush their teeth twice daily still have visible plaque deposits. Even those who brush their teeth immediately before a dental health examination have plaque on 1/3 of their teeth.

Written by Moyra Aspey

## FEEDBACK

We are all proud of our work and strive to continue offering high quality treatment and advice. However, like any other organisation, we cannot be perfect all the time and if you feel we have let you down in any way, please let us know and we will do our best to try to resolve the situation. We are always open to suggestions and constructive criticism and would be pleased to hear from you.

NEWSLETTER COMPILED &  
EDITED BY THE TEAM