



## SMOKE ALARM

Welcome 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.



Denplan

### PRACTICE HOURS

Mon	09.00 - 17.30
Tues	10.00 - 19.00
Wed	09.00 - 17.30
Thur	09.00 - 17.30
Fri	09.00 - 17.00

We know that a lot of you who are smokers are thinking about giving up, particularly as the ban on smoking in public places comes into effect this year. We are also aware that some smokers are happy with their habit. But why does the practice have an interest in providing smoking advice?

It is part of the job of every dentist and hygienist to advise their patients of the possible effects of smoking on their mouth and to provide encouragement to any smoker who wishes to stop. There are many effects of smoking that can be seen in the mouth. These include staining of teeth, fillings and dentures. These can be difficult to remove. The tongue may be discoloured and the ability to taste foods is reduced. The mouth may become drier and bad breath is common. Whilst these are undesirable, there are more serious consequences of smoking affecting the mouth.

Mouth cancer is about four times more prevalent in smokers than non-smokers and this cancer is on the increase. It kills one person every five hours in the UK, with chances of survival after five years at 50%.

Gum disease (periodontitis) is around seven times more common in smokers and they will loose more teeth as a result. The disease progresses faster and

the amount of improvement following treatment is reduced, especially on front teeth. Bacteria involved in periodontitis thrive in the warm dry environment of a smoker's mouth. There tends to be more tartar build-up that makes oral hygiene less effective and therefore attracts more bacteria. The body's immune system is also impaired so it is less able to offer protection. The uptake of vitamins is reduced in smokers. Vitamin C is an anti-oxidant that is needed to maintain periodontal health and vitamin A is needed by the immune system.

Bleeding gums is a sign of poor periodontal health. In smokers the blood supply to the gums is reduced so this warning sign may not be present and gum problems can go unnoticed. A reduced blood supply also means healing following periodontal treatment, surgery or tooth removal will be slower. Painful mouth infections are more common in smokers. These can cause severe bad breath and ulceration that can lead to long-term problems. Of course everyone will also be aware of the effects smoking has on a person's general health.

Sadly, half of all smokers will die as a result of their habit. The younger a person is when they start smoking the more likely they are to smoke for longer

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and die early as a result.

If you would like more information on the health risks of smoking or advice on giving up, there are some contacts at the end of this article.

### Dental Advice For Smokers

- Visit the dentist regularly, they will screen for oral cancer and periodontitis
- Visit the hygienist as recommended to help maintain gum health
- Brush carefully twice daily and clean between teeth daily
- Gently brush your tongue to keep your breath fresh
- Use a denture soaking solution to remove denture stains and harmful bacteria
- If you chew gum or suck mints after a cigarette, swap to sugar-free
- Have any unusual red, white patches or persistent ulcers checked as soon as possible
- Eat a healthy, well balance diet, high in fruit and vegetables

### Points of Contact

Smokeline 0800 848484

Quitline 0800 002200

[www.givingupsmoking.co.uk](http://www.givingupsmoking.co.uk)

[www.healthscotland.com/tobacco](http://www.healthscotland.com/tobacco)

The Press & Journal reported that a man wandered into a private garden and threatened to stab the owner with a toothbrush, the man had been drinking. (Mouthwash, maybe?)

## Plagued by Teeth?

Between 430 and 426BC a plague swept across Egypt to Libya and then Greece.

This plague ended the Golden Age of Athens, shifting the balance of power in the area to Sparta.

The plague is thought to have killed one third of all Athenians.

The cause of the plague has been speculated upon for many years. Ideas including a bubonic plague, anthrax, smallpox and measles. However, the recent excavation of a burial pit close to Athens has allowed scientists access to DNA remnants contained in the pulp of teeth. These remnants have revealed that the plague was similar to the modern form of Typhoid, a killer disease even today in developing worlds.

## Coming Clean

In the 19th Century surgery and dentistry were carried out with little regard to cleanliness. Instruments were only washed between treatments, if you were lucky. However, changes were afoot and there follows some examples of how ideas changed.

A book published in 1890 described the micro-organisms in the mouth and the diseases they may cause.

An article in a dental journal advised dentists to scrub hands and nails and not to hold instruments behind their ear or between their teeth! Instruments were sterilised for a few minutes in boiling water.

Staff in a London Dental Hospital were advised to dip their hands into perchloride of mercury before putting them into patients mouths.

Formaldehyde gas was used to sterilise surgeries.

It was not unknown for dentists to smoke over their patients during treatment and rest their cigarette on the tray next to any instruments.

Thankfully things have moved on even further since those early days and we are aware of the need for cleanliness at the practice to ensure the safety of patients, our families and ourselves. Everyone in the team, old and new, is trained in cross-infection control. We all wear gloves and eye-protection and uniforms are not worn outside the practice.

Hand cleaning is important, as you are probably aware from the media, and we all use a protocol now used in the hospital environment. This is effective at destroying a wide range of bacteria, fungi and viruses.

Instruments are either disposable or are cleaned manually then ultrasonically. Following this, they are sterilised at 137°C in an autoclave. Work surfaces are cleaned with the appropriate solutions and both treatment rooms receive a thorough cleaning on a regular basis.

All our cross-infection routines are covered in practice protocols that are up-dated when new advice or materials become available. Team members take great pride in ensuring the cleanliness of the practice workspaces.



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

In 1800 there were about 40 dentists in London and 20 in the rest of the UK. Unregistered practitioners outnumbered qualified dentists and it was not until the 1921 Dentists Act that only registered dentists could practice dentistry.

## TV Teeth

Research into television advertising in relation to dental health has revealed that UK children are exposed to the highest level of advertising in Europe.

Reviewing 41 hours of children's television on the ITV1 channel, the researchers recorded 24 adverts per hour of broadcasting. A third of these adverts promoted food and drink products of which just over 95% could be damaging to dental health due to high levels of sugar and/or acid.

The most frequently advertised products were cereals with added sugar, non-carbonated soft drinks and confectionary.

Elsewhere in Europe Norway and Sweden have totally banned advertising aimed at children. However, the authors of this research suggest advertising directed at children be limited and carry a health warning.

An American periodontist (gum specialist) has developed a new treatment for gum disease. It involves stretching the gum to gain access to the infected tissues below, rather than cutting the gum as in traditional surgery. Trials continue.

## 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*