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Dentistry by Appointment

Focus on Oral Health

**Produced for
the patients of
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D.D.S.**

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The true cost of **DENTAL CARE**

The cost of dental care is often cited as a reason patients put off receiving routine dental care, sometimes waiting until they are in extreme pain to seek treatment. What many patients don't realize is that foregoing regular dental checkups can lead to more costly dental care in the long run.

Not only can dental health be adversely affected, but patients may suffer related systemic illnesses that can be worsened by poor oral health.

Many diseases, such as diabetes, heart disease, and even pregnancy complications, have been linked to poor oral health. If you have one or more of these conditions or are at high risk, routine dental checkups are especially important to prevent additional problems.

Infections such as periodontal disease or an abscessed tooth can cause these conditions to be aggravated and may result in higher medical-care costs.

In addition, if you suspect you may have an oral-health problem such as an abscess, a cracked tooth, a cavity, etc., the cost of dental treatment can rise the longer care is delayed. Rather than a filling, you may end up paying for an extraction, root canal, crown, and so

on. Compare the cost of your twice-yearly exam and cleaning with the possibility of suffering unnecessary pain or even losing work or school hours due to pain.

We value our patients and believe everyone deserves quality dental care regardless of income or insurance status. If you are experiencing difficulty with paying for your dental treatment, please let us know so we can discuss available options.

Remember, investing in your oral health is a smart investment in your overall health. It can lead to substantial savings on dental and medical costs over time.

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***When we say "thank you," we mean it.
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Blood and gums

You're happily brushing away. You're about to rinse your brush when you notice the reddish hue in the bristles. You look down and see blood in the sink as well. What's going on?

While bleeding gums can be a little frightening, the cause of the problem can usually be reversed if treated quickly.

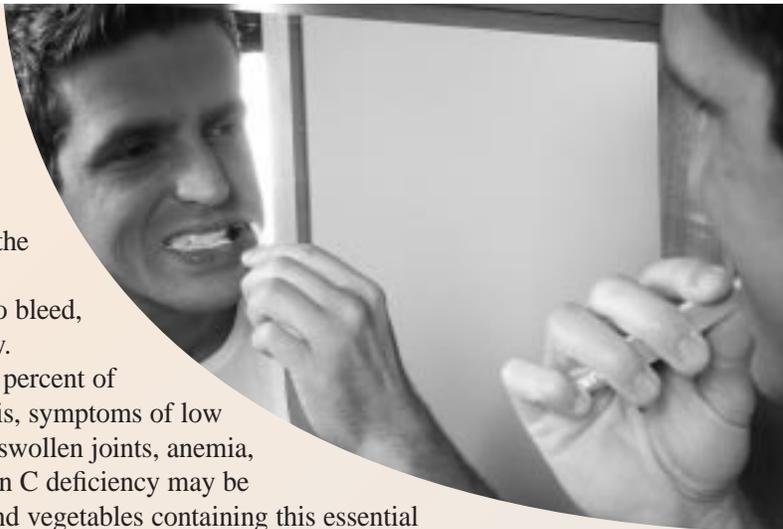
Gingivitis, which causes gums to become puffy, tender, and to bleed, can be a symptom of periodontal disease or vitamin C deficiency.

Although vitamin C deficiency is an unlikely cause, about 15 percent of Americans do suffer from low vitamin C. In addition to gingivitis, symptoms of low C include dry, scaly skin, hair that is dry and splits, nosebleeds, swollen joints, anemia, and lowered resistance to infection. Those suffering from vitamin C deficiency may be prescribed vitamins and encouraged to eat a diet high in fruits and vegetables containing this essential vitamin. Good sources include citrus fruits, broccoli, cauliflower, blueberries, cranberries, and juices.

Periodontal disease is far more common than vitamin C deficiency, affecting 75 percent or more of the population. In the early stages, periodontal disease can often be cured. Gingivitis is one of the first signs of periodontal disease, and it is a warning that the gums need more attention. A first step to take is to put more effort into oral hygiene. This means brushing after each meal and flossing daily. Professional dental care is also a must. Untreated, gingivitis can lead to periodontitis, which causes the pockets between the gums and teeth to deepen and teeth to loosen. Periodontal disease is the number-one cause of tooth loss.

Other causes of gingivitis include certain medications, pregnancy, and some systemic diseases, such as diabetes. Brushing too hard and eating certain foods that are hard on gums can also lead to bleeding.

Your dentist is the gatekeeper for health problems that begin in the mouth. Bleeding gums should not be ignored. If you notice pinkish-red on your toothbrush, step up your home-care routine, but also seek professional help to find the root cause of the problem.



FOODS THAT FIGHT DECAY

Most people know that certain foods are less damaging to your teeth than others, but there are also foods that can be beneficial. Certain fruits and vegetables and dairy foods can have beneficial effects.

Some of the best foods for teeth are also the noisiest to eat. These include raw foods that are known for going "crunch." Perhaps the most famous of these are apples, which are well-known for their ability to help cleanse the mouth. Carrots and celery work in a similar fashion, and when eaten regularly, they may even help to lighten stains and brighten your smile. Raw foods also stimulate the salivary glands to help wash away food debris found on teeth.

Foods that contain calcium—such as yogurt and cheeses—

are known for helping children to grow strong teeth, but dairy foods are good for your teeth your whole life through. Cheese, in particular, contains nutrients that can interfere with plaque formation. In addition, the texture of some cheeses can help increase saliva production.

When choosing the occasional sweet, chocolate, although it contains sugar, can be less detrimental than other treats because it melts away rather than sticking to teeth.

Improving your dental health isn't simply a matter of avoiding foods that are sugar-laden and sticky. Rather, choosing foods that are good for your teeth can mean enjoying better dental health and a healthier diet.



Do adults need fluoride?

Many adults believe their need for fluoride ended when all their permanent teeth erupted, but that's not the case. Adults, especially those who didn't receive adequate fluoride as children, are still in need of fluoride to help prevent decay as adults.

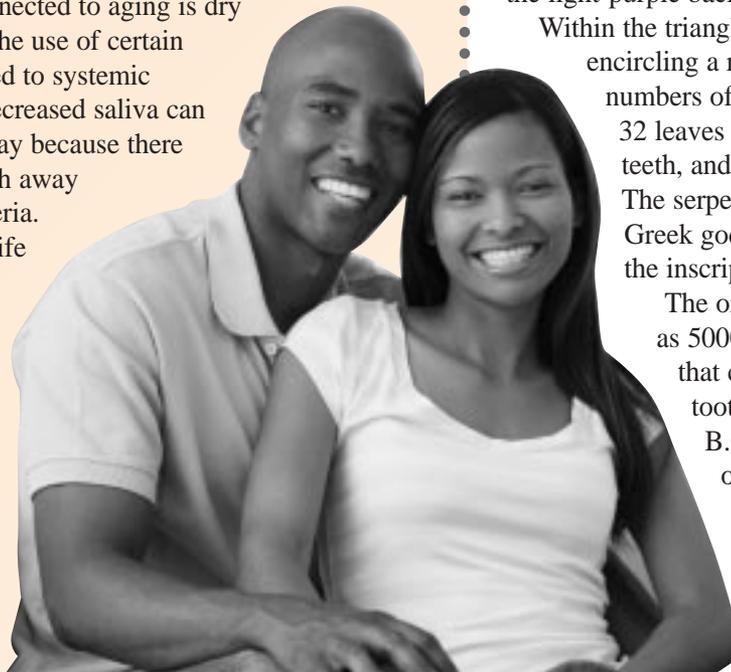
Fluoride helps prevent cavities in two ways. First, it affects the enamel of the teeth, helping to interfere with the decay process. Using fluoride on the teeth daily in a toothpaste or rinse, coupled with fluoride treatments as recommended by a dentist, can aid in stopping decay and help the enamel of the teeth better resist future cavities.

In addition, there are positive systemic responses to fluoride. When fluoride enters the body, it becomes part of bodily fluids, such as saliva, and builds up to continually bathe the surface of the teeth and provide further resistance to acid attacks that cause decay.

Aside from fighting decay on the biting surfaces of teeth, where it often starts, fluoride can also help prevent problems near the gum line. Adults who often experience gum recession that exposes the roots of the teeth may be subject to root decay. The chances of suffering from root decay increase with age. However, once fluoride has become part of the tooth, it can diminish the chances of root decay.

Another dental problem connected to aging is dry mouth, which can result from the use of certain medications and has been linked to systemic conditions such as diabetes. Decreased saliva can mean increased chances of decay because there isn't enough saliva to help wash away debris and cavity-causing bacteria. Adequate fluoride throughout life can help to counteract problems such as these and reduce chances of decay.

More and more Americans are smiling well into their golden years because they are able to keep their own teeth. Fluoride—for both children and adults—has been a big reason why.



THE MEANING BEHIND THE SEAL

The symbol of the American Dental Association was chosen in 1965, but parts of the insignia date back to the earliest dental association in the United States, and even to the ancient Greeks.

Each piece of the symbol has meaning that directly links it to the dental profession. The outer part of the design uses a triangle entwined with a circle. The triangle is the Greek letter delta, which stands for dentistry, while the circle is the Greek "O," which stands for odont, or tooth.

In 1897, what was then called the National Association of Dental Faculties decided that lilac would be the official color of the profession. The shading within the triangle and circle of the design uses this color, as do dental schools and other dental emblems and banners. The letter "O" is generally gold, and the triangle is black. The rod is gold, and the figures are outlined in black to delineate them from the light-purple background.

Within the triangle and circle is the figure of a serpent encircling a rod flanked by leaves and berries. The numbers of leaves and berries are significant; the 32 leaves represent the number of permanent teeth, and the 20 berries represent the first teeth. The serpent is symbolic of Aesculapius, the Greek god of medicine. In the bottom of the "O," the inscription simply reads DENTISTRY.

The origins of dentistry are ancient. As early as 5000 B.C., evidence from Sumeria notes that cavities may have been the result of tooth worms. Later, between 500 and 300 B.C., Hippocrates (considered the father of medicine) and Aristotle wrote about dentistry. It seems fitting that the dental insignia should include symbols dating back to man's earliest attempts to cure dental caries.

GOOD EATING—even with dentures

A denture that doesn't fit right or look natural can be a detriment to quality of life and even affect self-esteem. There are people who avoid certain foods and social situations because of discomfort over their dentures.

Good nutrition is important to everyone's health, and an ill-fitting denture can interfere with proper nutrition by causing the wearer to avoid certain foods. But food isn't only about nutrition. There's a pleasure in eating and social satisfaction in enjoying good food while chatting with family and friends. Many social situations include or even revolve around food. The denture wearer who is uncomfortable eating around others may shun such occasions, robbing him or her of social engagement and lowering self-confidence.

A better-fitting, -looking, and -functioning denture can change this scenario. Denture options, including partial plates and implants, can replace dentures that don't fit well or don't appear natural.

Denture wearers shouldn't resign themselves to a life of isolation. Eating, talking, and overall quality of life can be improved with replacements for natural teeth that look, feel, and function more like your own.

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DENTAL FACT



Americans
spend \$2 billion
a year on dental
products—
toothpaste,
mouthwash,
and dental floss.