

# Tooth Talk

From the desktop of Dr. Darren Buschel

## From the Dentist . . .

April is Dental Health Month, so we have published this newsletter to remind you of some basics and introduce you to some new ideas in dental health.

We would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the great accomplishments of some of our patients. Congratulations to **Anne and Roy Hulse** on the opening of their new "**Scallywags**" warehouse/office space masterpiece. The building is a piece of architectural art that really adds character and focus to the Pandosy area.

Congratulations to **Linda & John Boruta** on the recent birth of their daughter **Lindsey Nicole** (9lbs 1oz).

Also, kudos to **Pierre and Diane Morazzain** and the local



**MS Society** for their best "**Walk for Multiple Sclerosis**" yet. In its 7th year, the walk had 650 participants and raised \$80000. Well done!

I would like to invite you to share with us any pictures you may have of yourself, family or friends taking care of their new or "used" smiles. We are holding a competition for the best picture of your oral hygiene habits. Where do you brush your teeth? What exotic locales have you brushed and flossed in? If you climbed Mt. Everest on your vacation, did you remember to take your toothbrush to the top? Drop by our office with your pictures so we may have a look and make a copy. If we like what we see and use it in our next newsletter, we will give you a brand new electric toothbrush! We like to see how and where our patients take care of their teeth and we want to show everyone else what wonderful patients we have. A picture is worth a thousand words.

**Y**ou have heard the terms on television ads, seen them in print ads, and noticed them on the labels of an assortment of dental products. What do the terms plaque, gingivitis, tartar, and periodontal disease really mean?

Doctors and dentists speaking "doctor talk" often forget that their patients do not. Advertising companies also like to use these terms because it makes their products sound more scientific and more effective. **Let's find out what the professionals are talking about.**

Our mouth is full of bacteria. In fact, our entire body is covered with bacteria! These organisms are so small that it takes a microscope to see them. In a healthy mouth there is a natural balance of different bacterial species. This natural balance keeps any one species of bacteria from becoming too strong or out of balance so as to dominate. When any one group or family of bacteria begin to dominate their levels of toxins increase to a point where they stimulate the immune system and cause an infection.

Brushing and flossing remove bacteria from the mouth preventing them from overgrowing. You can never completely get rid of all the bacteria in your mouth but brushing and flossing make sure the number of bacteria you do have is in a safe range. A common mistake many people make is to brush but not floss. This allows bacteria to build up to dangerous levels between the teeth where brushing alone can not reach.

**Plaque is simply a sticky yellowish-white film composed of bacteria, small particles, proteins, and mucus. This plaque continuously accumulates on the teeth and gums.**

With proper brushing and flossing plaque is easily removed. If plaque is not removed by brushing and flossing, over time, plaque will calcify (harden).

**This hardened plaque is known as tartar and can no longer be**

**removed with simple brushing and flossing. It must be removed by a dentist.**

The problem with plaque and tartar is that the longer they are left on the teeth and gums, the more harmful the bacteria in the plaque and tartar become. These harmful bacteria begin to domi-

nate. Many of these more nasty bacteria are anaerobes meaning that oxygen will kill them. How do they survive in the mouth?

They survive in the

inner parts of the plaque where oxygen can not reach them. In addition, large clumps of bacterial plaque at the gum line will prevent oxygen from reaching areas under the gum line. These oxygen poor regions are fertile environments for the more hostile anaerobic bacteria.

The more harmful bacteria release toxins which damage the gums. They also cause gum infection and inflammation which activates the immune system. **This inflammation of the gums is called gingivitis and is the first stage of gum disease.**

To prevent gingivitis all you need to do is keep the bacterial populations in balance by flossing, brushing, and rinsing with an anti-microbial rinse which removes excess bacteria. Proper home dental care can remove plaque. Professional cleanings during routine dental visits remove tartar which harbors and nurtures the proliferation of the undesirable bacteria.

If left unchecked, however, gingivitis may progress to periodontal disease. **Periodontal disease is primarily caused by a "silent" and "painless" bacterial infection of the bone and ligaments which hold the teeth in place.**

**Periodontal disease will cause bone to erode and teeth to progressively loosen to a point where normal chewing causes them to fall out !**

Continued over . . .

## Understanding Gingivitis and Periodontal Disease

**The greatest compliment you could give us is your referral !!**

In periodontal disease the inflamed gums will pull away from the teeth. Normally there is a small 1-3 mm space between your gums and teeth. This space is known as the periodontal pocket. In periodontal disease, this space becomes much deeper. A dentist can check the width of this space with a probe and thereby tell you if you have periodontal disease.

Other signs of periodontal disease include:

- Bad breath
- Red or swollen gums
- Loose teeth
- Sensitive teeth
- Pus coming from around the teeth
- Pain on chewing
- Tender gums
- Bleeding gums.

Treatment of periodontal disease sometimes requires surgery. The best advice that we can give is for people to prevent periodontal disease by brushing and flossing to remove plaque and seeing a dentist regularly (every six months) to remove any tartar that might build up. **As the saying goes, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.**

## The Tooth Fairy On-Line

In an early March NBA game Houston Rockets rookie guard Steve Francis collided with Denver Nuggets guard Tariq Abdul-Wahad and lost a tooth. He didn't just get it knocked out, he lost it. No one was able to find it, or that's what they thought.

The tooth turned up on Ebay, for sale at auction. For sale. A tooth for sale. Apparently a fan found the tooth under his court-side seat. In a way, you can hardly blame the fan, who probably paid \$500 for that seat, from wanting to get some money to get his house out of hawk.

But, alas, the chance to bid on the tooth was easy enough to pass up, as the tooth was pulled from the market after being bid to \$101. This apparent "tooth fairy" wanted more pillow stuffing than that, though \$101 is pretty good dough for a tooth in my book.

Houston coach Rudy Tomjanovich summed it up best, "I love Steve, but I wouldn't pay for his tooth." I can't wait until someone gets ahold of

### For the Office of Dr. Darren Buschel

#### Office Hours

Tuesday 8:30am – 5:30pm  
 Wednesday 8:30am – 5:30pm  
 Thursday 10:30am – 7:30pm  
 Friday 8:30am – 5:30pm

(weekends and evening appts available)

#### Location

2149 Springfield Rd.  
 (across from Wal-Mart)

#### Contact Information

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 Emergencies 764-8511  
 E-mail drbuschel@home.com

Rosie O'Donnell's nail clippings.

## Mouthguards Save Face

Here's news that'll keep a smile on your face: a mouthguard can greatly reduce chances of tooth damage. In fact, an athlete is 60 times more likely to damage his/her teeth when not wearing a mouthguard.

"Anytime you participate in an athletic activity, there is a possibility of injury to the mouth and teeth," says Dr. Bill Blair, dentist to the Calgary Flames NHL hockey team. Some sports where mouthguards should be worn are baseball, football, gymnastics, handball, in-line skating, martial arts, boxing, rugby, skateboarding, snowboarding, soccer and volleyball.

Mouthguards save more than teeth: they can prevent or decrease the severity of concussion and fractures and protect your tongue and cheeks from cuts by your teeth.

*\*if you are interested in a custom fitted mouthguard, made from an impression of your teeth, call or drop by our office and we will be happy to give you the information you need.*

## Pets Need Dental Care, Too !

Pets can have similar dental concerns to their owners. Home dental care for your pets should include regular brushing and proper nutrition.

**Brushing Your Pet's Teeth :** Introduce a brushing program to pets gradually. Avoid over-restraining your pet and keep brushing sessions short and positive. A cat or small dog can be held in your lap. Praise and reassure your pet throughout the process. At first, dip a finger into beef bouillon for dogs or tuna water for cats. Rub the soaked finger gently over the pet's mouth and teeth. Make the initial sessions short and positive. Gradually, introduce gauze over the finger and gently scrub the teeth in a circular motion. Finally, you can introduce a soft toothbrush designed for pets. Use a sensitive or ultra-soft brush designed for people or a brush designed for pets. Special pet toothbrushes are available from your veterinarian or specialty pet store. Don't use toothpaste designed for people because it could upset the animal's stomach.

**Providing Proper Nutrition:** Avoid feeding pets table scraps because they can increase the build up of plaque and tartar, and can lead to other health problems.

Feed your pet a nutritionally balanced food. There is now a specially formulated pet food with dental benefits for dogs and cats. This food is available through veterinarians and can help reduce the accumulation of plaque and tartar

