

News from the office of...



Dr. Anna Szmitko

Welcome to our latest newsletter!

We've tried to include something of interest to all our patients in this issue and want to use this forum to remind you of the many dental options that modern dentistry can offer you, in a comfortable environment, and with beautiful results.

If you have some time off before the fall schedule is in full swing, we'd like to ensure that you and your family are up-to-date on your dental checkups before you get swept away by all the activities of the fall season.

Once you're finished reading this newsletter, please pass it along to your friends and family for their interest. We are currently accepting new patients and welcome calls from your friends and your family members if they need more information on our services.

We look forward to seeing you soon!

All the best,

Anna Szmitko

Dr. Anna Szmitko

ANCHOR AN IMPLANT AND STRENGTHEN YOUR JAW



Replacing a missing tooth or teeth can be achieved by means of dentures, bridges or dental implants. While all of these methods will result in filling the gap left by the missing tooth, there is only one that will actually help prevent the natural loss of bone in your jaw over time, and that's the dental implant.

Most people are not aware that once a tooth is lost, the bone surrounding the original tooth starts to deteriorate in their jaw. Over time, the bone loss can cause facial changes, problems with eating and changes in speech. The installation of a dental implant "anchor" - an artificial tooth root placed where the missing tooth was - fills the gap left by the natural root so that this deterioration doesn't have the opportunity to start. The jaw bone grows around this "anchor" to secure it in place, providing a firmly fixed base for your new tooth, without any of the surrounding teeth being affected.

Dental implants are ideal for people with healthy gums and bones who are looking for permanent, natural-looking replacements for one or more teeth. Please ask us to show you how dental implants work, and if they may be the solution to filling the space left by your missing tooth or teeth.



REPLACE THE “ACKKK” WITH “AHHH”!

Your gag reflex is nature’s way of protecting you from choking on objects by preventing them from getting to the back of your throat, with the exception of the normal swallowing process. Many people gag or have the feeling of wanting to vomit when they put their fingers too far back in their mouth, while others will experience the same sensation when a dental staff member touches the inside of their mouth with a dental instrument. Sometimes just the thought of a foreign object in the mouth is enough to trigger the fear that a person will be sick. In acute cases, there’s even a term used for the extreme fear of gagging and throwing up: emetophobia.

While some gagging is a natural self-defense mechanism, having a sensitive gag reflex can make going to the dentist uncomfortable. Try some of these suggestions the next time you come in, to see if they reduce your gag reflex:

- Breathe through your nose while we work on your mouth. (Take a nasal decongestant before your appointment to keep the nasal passageways open if necessary).
- Try distraction techniques, from humming to meditating to listening to music on your headphones. Some people find physical distractions work too, like focusing on keeping one foot at a time slightly elevated from the chair.

If your gag reflex is severe, we can discuss topical and local anesthetics, or even sedation options, especially if the necessary dental work is more involved or will take some time.

Overall fear of the dental office or of dental procedures is another reason some people avoid coming in. In many cases, this trepidation stems from accounts of past experiences in dental offices that did not have the equipment and techniques that today’s modern dental practices have.

If you’ve been putting off having a dental procedure done in anticipation of pain or discomfort, you’ll be pleasantly surprised to hear of all the advances in dentistry that now eliminate a lot of the old “painful” stereotypes of the dentist. In your parents’ generation, or even early

in your own, dentistry was a dreaded process — a necessity only when the patient couldn’t bear the pain of a tooth crisis. A dentist’s job was to pull teeth, fill cavities and patch up dental problems, often when they were at an advanced stage.

Today’s patients recognize the importance of regular continuing-care dental visits to avoid potential problems before they begin. Even if you know there are existing dental issues that need to be addressed, there are new medications, sedation techniques and technological advances to resolve problems faster, more efficiently and with little to no discomfort.

The most important first step, however, is to discuss any fears and concerns with us. Whether it’s a fear of the dental office with its instruments and smells, or thoughts of “painful” procedures, or a concern about your sensitive gag reflex, it’s always better to talk to us about it before we begin even a preliminary examination of your mouth.

Please don’t let your fears hold you back. Let’s talk about all the ways we can make your dental appointments more comfortable for you.





BEAUTIFUL TEETH START WITH HEALTHY GUMS

Making plans to whiten, straighten or otherwise improve the appearance of your teeth? It's important to ensure your gums are in great shape first!

You may not think you have any problems with your gums, but it's estimated that most people will, at some point in their lives, experience some level of gum disease, even if they are not aware of it.

Here are some influences that can make you susceptible to gum disease:

- Smoking
- Poor oral hygiene
- Hormonal changes (e.g. menopause)
- Diabetes
- Medications that result in dry mouth
- Genetic susceptibility

Gum disease usually develops slowly and without causing any pain, so you may not notice anything until the disease is serious and you are in danger of losing teeth.

Tell us if you're experiencing any of these symptoms of gum disease:

- Persistent bad breath or a chronic bad taste in your mouth
- Red, swollen or tender gums
- Gums that bleed when you brush
- Sensitive teeth resulting in pain when you chew
- Loose teeth
- Teeth that look "longer" than they used to

In many cases, we can reverse the initial signs of gum disease, especially if we catch it early. Simple, yet effective ways to help keep your gums healthy and avoid gum disease include daily brushing and flossing, and regular dental visits for professional attention.

Time to check the health of your smile? Please call for an appointment today!

PROBLEMS EATING? CHEW ON THESE IDEAS!

Chewing problems can be temporary – the result of something you had done at the dental office such as dental surgery or the recent application of braces – or something more long-term that resulted from avoiding the dental office, such as tooth decay, tooth loss, or gum disease.



While you're waiting for your surgery to heal, waiting to get used to your new orthodontic appliance, or waiting to see your dentist to address your dental malady, you'll need to maintain your nutritional intake. Look for soft, nutrient-rich foods to provide you with the vitamins, minerals and nutrients necessary for healing and overall health.

Some soft-food options include:

- Scrambled eggs
- Oatmeal
- Soup with soft vegetables, or puréed or cream soups
- Soft cheeses, including cottage cheese
- Pudding, custard, yogurt, sorbet or frozen yogurt
- Meatloaf
- Shredded chicken and meat
- Chicken or tuna salad

- Tofu
- Mashed potatoes, pasta, polenta
- Soft-cooked rice, couscous, quinoa, bulgur
- Avocado
- Refried beans
- Hummus
- Creamy-style peanut butter
- Soft bread, saltines or matzoh
- Baked apples or applesauce

Before you undergo any kind of dental procedure – even if it's just teeth whitening – make sure you're aware of any pre- or post-appointment eating or drinking considerations. We'll help you plan your menu for your return home to ensure the best results for your smile – and your stomach!

DO YOU SUFFER FROM TMD?



TMD, or temporomandibular disorders, are problems arising from the temporomandibular joints (TMJ), which connect our jaws to our skulls. To feel them work, place your fingers right in front of your ears and open and close your mouth. These are the joints that allow us to open and close our mouths and move our jaws in order to talk, yawn, chew and swallow.

Most people have no reason to think about their TMJ if their joints are functioning smoothly, but for the millions of people throughout North America who suffer from TMD, these joints may be the starting point for a host of medical symptoms.

Indications of TMD can vary from person to person, and may present themselves through any of the following symptoms:

- Headaches and/or dizziness
- Neck pain
- Facial or jaw pain
- Ear pain
- Clicking or popping noise in the jaw

- Difficulty chewing
- Limited mouth opening
- Uncomfortable or changing bite
- Tinnitus (ringing in the ears), or muffled ears
- Clenching or bruxing (teeth grinding), resulting in worn-down teeth

If you are diagnosed with TMD, we can work together to ease the discomfort of your condition by providing you with a variety of stress reducing exercises, muscle relaxants and even a mouth protector to prevent teeth grinding. Give us a call to discuss this complex condition and the steps we can take to help you with it.

ORTHODONTICS 1-2-3

The process of straightening teeth is usually a three-step procedure, involving pre-treatment plans, the "active treatment" stage and then the "retention" phase.

Your initial appointment will involve a compilation of information on you and your teeth. We'll look at your medical history, perform a clinical oral examination, and take photos, X-rays and plaster study models of your teeth.

The "active treatment" segment involves the application of the orthodontic appliances themselves, and the monitoring and periodic adjustment of the appliances so that teeth are moved correctly and efficiently.

Step 3, the final ("retention") phase of your treatment, follows the removal of the initial braces. At this stage we'll fit you with a retainer to help keep your teeth in their new positions.

The length of the orthodontic treatment varies depending on the patient's age, how severe the problem is, how closely the patient follows treatment instructions and, of course, the health of the teeth, gums and supporting bone. The good news is that today's orthodontics are much more comfortable and effective than ever before, and generally faster than the old days too.

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Thurs.: 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Fri.: 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Sat.: 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Our Services Include:

- Family & Cosmetic Dentistry
- Orthodontics
- Implant Dentistry
- Crowns • Bridges
- Porcelain Veneers
- Tooth Bonding
- White Fillings
- Root Canals
- Smile Whitening
- Nitrous Oxide
- Sleep Apnea
- TMJ Disorders

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