

News from the office of...



Dr. Anna Szmítko

Welcome to our Smile Newsletter - a newsletter especially produced to bring you practical tips and information on everyday dental health issues. Whether it's a guide to brushing and flossing effectively or options on whitening your teeth, we hope to bring you the information that you need to ensure good oral hygiene and health, and leave you smiling!

Our **Annual Toy and Food Drive** began on Oct. 1, 2012. Please donate an unwrapped toy or non-perishable food item up to Dec. 22, 2012. We will be raffling off our **Family Christmas Stocking on Dec. 22, 2012**. Please visit us to fill out your ballot. Thank you for your support!

As always, if there's anything you have questions about or if you need further information, please do not hesitate to give us a call. We appreciate and thank you for your referrals.

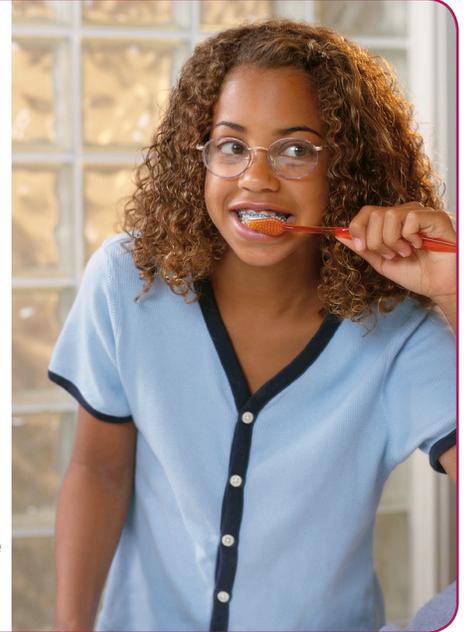
All the best,

Anna Szmítko

Dr. Anna Szmítko

BRACE YOURSELF, THE EARLIER THE BETTER!

In the past, braces used to correct a child's smile were not considered for as long as the child still had baby teeth. Today, general dentists, orthodontists and parents are realizing that early orthodontic treatment can be extremely effective, especially as the child's head and mouth are still growing, and teeth are more accessible to straightening.



Braces are typically applied between age 10 and 14, although it's not unusual to start treatment earlier. If it is determined that orthodontic treatment is necessary, we first gather pretreatment information to determine the best course of treatment. This evaluation includes a clinical examination, medical and dental history, plaster study models of teeth, photographs of the patient's face and teeth and X-rays of the mouth and head.

Once the evaluation is analyzed, the appropriate course of action can begin. Appliances are applied on the teeth and adjusted periodically so that teeth are moved correctly and efficiently. Complete cooperation from the patient is essential to ensure the most efficient treatment time possible. An average treatment time is 24 months, although this varies depending on the age of the patient, the severity of the initial problem, the health of the

teeth, gums and supporting bone and the cooperation of the patient during the treatment phase.

Oral hygiene is extremely important while wearing braces, for a number of reasons. Braces provide lots of tiny hiding places for food and plaque to get trapped, allowing decay to thrive and promote gum disease. Insufficient cleaning can also cause enamel staining around brackets or bands. It is crucial to brush carefully after every meal with a soft toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste, and floss between braces and under wires while continuing to go for professional dental cleanings every six months.

No matter what your age, you owe it to yourself to find out if you can straighten out your smile with the more comfortable, less noticeable braces of today. Come in and talk to us about how easy it is to have the perfect smile you've always wanted



MUSCLE MAINTENANCE

When thinking about all the muscles in your body, the tongue is most likely the last one to pop up in conversation, probably because not many people are aware it's a muscle!

The tongue is actually comprised of many groups of muscles that run in different directions to carry out the tongue's multiple functions. It is composed of muscle tissue with a coating of sensors for taste, heat, pain and tactile information.

The front of the tongue is very flexible and works in a multitude of ways, from working with the teeth to create different sounds and words, to helping you eat by moving food around your mouth while you chew. It moves food to the back of the mouth for the back teeth to grind, and, once it's mixed with saliva, the food is directed by the back muscles of the tongue into your esophagus, on its way to your stomach.

Of course, we know that in addition to helping us talk and eat, the tongue also helps us taste a multitude of different flavors, from sweet to salty, to sour to bitter. As we age, our taste buds begin to disappear from the sides and roof of our mouth, leaving the taste buds on the tongue to do most of the sensing. That's why we say that our "tastes change" as we get older — it's actually a change in our taste buds that allows us to eat foods when we're older that were too strong a flavor for us when we were children.

If your tastes run to tongue jewelry, be aware that, because the mouth contains millions of bacteria, the risk of infection in a tongue piercing is much higher compared with piercings in other body parts. The process of piercing has been known to damage nerves and alter the sense of taste, while tongue jewelry itself can also damage teeth and gums. If you are convinced you still want an oral piercing, make sure you research your sources carefully, and ensure a strict dental follow-up schedule so we can monitor any potential problems.

It's important to take care of your tongue, just like any other part of your mouth, by cleaning it properly and

checking it carefully for any changes that might indicate oral cancer. In fact, stick out your tongue and examine the top, bottom and sides in a mirror. If there are any skin changes, cuts or red or white patches that don't go away after a couple of weeks, make sure you come in so we can examine it thoroughly.

Cleaning the tongue — an important, yet often overlooked, oral hygiene issue — is as simple as taking an extra few seconds when you're brushing your teeth, to gently brush your tongue too. The surface of the tongue has tiny bumps called papillae that can harbor bacteria, and trapped germs can not only lead to bad breath, but can overgrow to result in a tongue that is yellow, white, or even black and fuzzy-looking (yuck!). If you have a sensitive gag-reflex, you may be more comfortable using a tongue-scraper instead of a toothbrush to clean your tongue.

A professional tongue inspection is just one of the many standard — yet important — procedures covered in your dental examinations. Please call if you have any questions or concerns about the way your tongue looks or feels.



EAT RIGHT, SMILE BRIGHT!

With the school year in full swing, and part-time jobs, sports and a dizzying selection of extra-curricular activities competing for students' time, it's no wonder that many kids rely on energy drinks and "nutrition" bars to give them the extra boost they need to get everything done. Unfortunately, these products don't fill all of a growing teen's nutritional needs, and they can also be harmful to their teeth and overall health.



With prolonged exposure, the corrosive effects of sports and energy drinks can be even more damaging to teeth than soft drinks, while the gooey texture of energy bars and nutritional bars allows sugar to cling to the crevasses of teeth, promoting decay.

Once sticky, sweet remnants of snacks find their way between or behind teeth, they encourage plaque, a sticky, clear coating of bacteria, to form on teeth, feeding off the sugar. This produces an acid that immediately attacks the teeth. Continued attacks can cause the tooth enamel – the thin, protective outer layer of the tooth that helps maintain

its structure and shape – to break down, eventually leading to tooth decay.

Instead of relying on the "quick fix" of an energy bar or energy drink, go for more natural food and drink options. Our office is a great place to get ideas for tooth-friendly snacks and drinks that are not only as convenient as the popular ones, but much healthier too. Please ask us for suggestions!

It's important to make the time – no matter how busy you and your children are – to have teeth checked for any initial damage, as once tooth erosion progresses, it will cost more in terms of time, money, comfort and effort, to fix.



NO TIME? NO EXCUSES!

**In a rush? That's no excuse not to brush!
Brushing your teeth takes only a few minutes, and can
make a big difference in your overall oral health.**

Every bit of food you put into your mouth feeds the naturally present bacteria that's responsible for demineralizing and eroding your teeth. Keeping the harmful bacteria at bay involves not only knowing which foods and drinks to avoid, but also being vigilant with cleaning your teeth at least twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste, flossing daily and visiting the dentist regularly.

No matter how tired you are, it's important to remember to brush your teeth before you go to bed. Because the production of saliva slows down when you sleep, you can't rely on it to help wash away any food particles lingering in your mouth. If you don't clean your teeth thoroughly, you're giving the bacteria

involved in causing tooth decay hours to multiply in your mouth.

How long should you brush for? While many people think that a quick swish of the toothbrush around their mouth is sufficient, the recommended time is around three minutes. Whether you keep an egg timer in the bathroom to monitor your brushing time, or keep the radio on and make sure you brush for at least the length of one full song, it's important to dedicate a few minutes a day to a habit that will contribute to a beautiful smile, fresh breath and great oral and overall health!



VIVE LA DIFFERENCE!

When it comes to missing teeth, research from the American Academy of Periodontology finds:

- 74 percent of women would be embarrassed by a missing tooth, a possible consequence of periodontal disease, compared to 57 percent of men.
- Women are almost twice as likely than men to notice missing teeth on another person.

It's important to recognize that consistent dental habits, including daily brushing and flossing, are the first line of defense against tooth loss from gum disease. If you or a loved one have already lost one or more teeth, however, you'll want to find out about your tooth replacement options.

A dental implant, along with a crown, can replace a missing tooth in the most natural-looking, and naturally functioning way. It's important to remember that a missing tooth is more than just a cosmetic imperfection – a gap between your teeth can influence the positions of other teeth, causing them to drift out of position and potentially change your bite, which may lead to gum disease, pain in the jaw joint and even more problems.

Research from the American Dental Association shows that, overall, people ranked a smile as the most attractive physical feature in others. Both men and women would agree that an appealing smile is a complete smile, with every tooth in place. Please talk to us about how to complete your smile with beautiful, permanent dental implants.

WHAT'S YOUR IDEAL SMILE?

Each person's idea of a perfect smile can differ greatly depending on a number of factors, including age, culture and social and professional circles.

Is your ideal smile comprised of:

- Your existing smile, just whiter?
- Teeth that are straighter, longer, shorter or more evenly aligned?
- Larger teeth, or teeth that don't have noticeable spaces between them?
- More proportionally balanced gums and teeth?

The best place to start is with a dental consultation, where we will discuss your smile and find out what you'd like to improve. In the simplest cases, you may be happy to brighten your smile slightly with a thorough removal of surface stains, while in other cases, you may be dreaming of an entire smile makeover.

Please call to discuss what's involved in creating the whiter, straighter, more complete smile that you've been dreaming of.

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Wed.: 10 a.m. - 7 p.m.
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
- Other Services

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