

Hammerlee Dental Care Newsletter



**Hammerlee
Dental Care**

News Updates

We've been up to some fun and exciting things here at Hammerlee Dental Care. Our office showcased our digital x-ray system, Dexis, to area dentists recently. We held an "open house" type event, in conjunction with Dexis representatives, to share the tremendous benefits of this technology with other Erie offices.

Hammerlee Dental Care was a major donor for the St. George School Christmas store this year. We donated oral health care products for 3 Chinese Auction baskets, as well as toothbrushes and toothpaste for Santa to hand out to each student.

We also provided toothbrush giveaways for the Wellsville school visit.

Linda did a public service radio interview about dental health that aired on 5 local radio stations in January. She promoted our "Sealant Saturday" event as well, which you can read about below.

As always, we're constantly continuing our education. Dr. Bill and Linda recently attended a lecture at Hamot about herbal and pharmaceuticals in relation to dentistry. Dr. Bill attended a course in Pittsburgh on new materials and techniques for crowns without



Linda Straub-Bruce at her radio interview

metal underneath.

We installed a new intra-oral camera system that you can read about on page two.

In January, we welcomed a new member to the Hammerlee Dental Care Team! Teresa is a great compliment to our office and brings years of experience to the office. You can read more about Teresa on page 3.

Sealant Saturday

Hammerlee Dental Care was proud to be a "Sealant Saturday" site for the Pennsylvania Dental Hygienists Association 9th Annual state-wide event.

On February 4th, we provided nearly \$7,000.00 in free preventative dental services to area children, ages 6-16. Those services

included screenings, sealants and fluoride varnish.

State Representative John Hornaman was in attendance and handed out participation certificates to our providers.

We thank Dr. Bill Hammerlee, our hygienists Linda, Stacie & Beth, our assistant Renee and den-



Our team with Representative John Hornaman

tal student Adam Hammerlee for giving their time and services to children in our community.

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On our website you can:

⇒ Check your scheduled appointments or make an appointment request

⇒ Complete necessary forms

⇒ Refer a friend

⇒ Learn about our staff and services

⇒ Access a wealth of dental health information

⇒ Read our previous newsletters

⇒ Provide valuable feedback and contact us

Inside this issue:

Service Spotlight 2

Children's Dental Health 2

Feature Patient 2

Did You Know ... 3

Prevention is the Key 3

Q & A 4

Service Spotlight: Intra-oral camera examination

All of our treatment rooms here at Hammerlee Dental Care now have a fantastic tool available ... the Iris Digital Doc® intra-oral cameras. We have had intra-oral cameras for a long time now, but we have upgraded to the state-of-the-art in technologically advanced imaging.

Intra-oral photographs are so valuable for us, your health care professionals, and for you, the patient. They assist us in capturing images of what we see during your examination. Additionally, they enlarge the image 40-50 times to provide clear and concise visibility of the very smallest things at which we looking.

We are able to show you the images and show you what's going on ... be it decay, fractures, tartar build-up or tissue lesions. By showing you these images on our monitors, we can educate you on your current oral health status and show you what things look like.

Together we can look at the images and discuss the treatment options available, monitor healing progress and track treatment progression. Also, we sometimes need to provide dental insurance companies with a little more information than a two-dimensional x-ray will show and these photos do a fantastic job filling in that "information gap".

We feel that these photos help us work with you as a team to meet your dental care needs and desires, in an efficient and comfortable manner.



We now use the Iris Digital Doc® intraoral camera, the industry leader in providing the finest quality photos.

Children's Dental Health: Thumb Sucking

Did you know that humans aren't the only primates that exhibit thumb sucking? Chimpanzees do it, and some lemurs do it as well!

We are born with a sucking reflex necessary for feeding, and ultimately, our survival. Although this reflex disappears at about 4 months of age, many believe that it lays the foundation for thumb sucking in some children.

Thumb sucking is not solely an instinc-

"Most children stop thumb sucking on their own between the ages of 2 and 4. "

tive behavior, it can bring comfort to a child when anxiety is present and it can be done out of habit and/or boredom.

Most children stop thumb sucking on their own between the ages of 2 and 4. If it continues past that, it may alter the shape of the oral cavity and cause more serious problems.

If your child sucks their thumb, try various techniques to help them stop. Use positive reinforcement by praising them when they don't do it. If anxiety is present, address the issue causing anxiety and combat boredom-related thumb sucking with a fun activity.

Feature Patient: Libby Mencer

Libby Mencer is an active 9 year old student of North East Intermediate Elementary. She enjoys playing sports such as basketball, soccer, golfing and swimming. She competed on the North East intramural swim team last summer and has plans to try out again in the spring. Her father has been teaching her to golf since she was three. She has a passion for reading, exploring nature, snowboarding and riding her

bike. She would rather be outside playing on the family farm that sitting in a house watching movies or playing video games. (Both of which are freely available to her!) One of her best friends is a horse named "Good Looking". They spend hours together in the pasture either grooming, bare back riding or just horsing around. Libby also has a heart for children who are younger than her or have disabilities. To her

they are just normal kids and the bottom line is, it's time to play. She has a sharp sense of wit and quick to find humor in the situation yet she is very sensitive to others feelings.



Libby Mencer

Did You Know ...

... that we have a new member of the Hammerlee Dental Care team? We welcomed Teresa Pflueger to our staff in January.

Teresa comes to us with over 10 years of dental assisting experience. Previously, she worked at Pleasant Ridge Manor for many years as a nurses aid.

Originally from Erie, Teresa lived in Fort Myers, Florida for 3 years before deciding to return to her home town.

She is married with 3 children, 2 boys and a girl. Her oldest son is in college studying international business and Mandarin, her 16-year old son is a Junior at McDowell and is interested in

business and computers and her 5 year old daughter is in Kindergarten and absolutely loves taking dance class.

Teresa enjoys being very active. She loves exercise and working out, with biking being one of her favorite ways to stay fit. She also enjoys the outdoors and fishing is one of her favorite outdoor activities. Teresa loves spending time with her family and friends and working on fixing up her new house.

"I'm so happy to be here and be part of such a wonderful staff here at Hammerlee Dental Care", Teresa said of her new position.

We are all grateful to have her here as



Teresa and her family

well! She brings of wealth of expertise and experience in the dental field and makes our patients feel so welcome and comfortable during their appointments.

Next time you're in the office, we're sure you'll enjoy meeting Teresa, and she looks forward to meeting you too.

Prevention is the Key: Toothbrush Germs

You may not view your toothbrush as a germ carrier, but depending on how humid and dirty your bathroom is, cold germs can flourish there. In the 1970s, University of Arizona researchers learned that each time you flush a toilet, droplets can spray onto your walls, shelves, towels and toothbrushes, up to 6 feet away. Families who keep toothbrushes close to each other may have bacteria bouncing from one brush to another. The Centers for Disease Control and researchers have disputed whether reusing a properly handled toothbrush can make you ill. Some experts contend that germs left on toothbrushes can cause infections, especially colds and gingivitis.

The bathroom is usually the second dirtiest room in your home, after the kitchen. To prevent illnesses, it's a good idea to disinfect the sink, countertop, bathtub and toilet on a weekly basis. Flushing a toilet with the lid up spreads germs, said Charles Gerba, a microbiology professor at the University of Arizona in Tucson. Polluted water vapor erupts from the toilet bowl, and it might take several hours for particles to eventually settle somewhere you might not want them. If your toothbrush is too close to the toilet, you might as well

brush your teeth with germs from your toilet.

Germs can live outside the body from a few seconds to 48 hours, depending on the virus and the surface, says Dr. James M. Steckelberg. Flu viruses usually survive longer on surfaces than cold viruses do. Both kinds of viruses probably live longer on nonporous surfaces, such as plastic, metal and wood, than on porous ones, including fabrics, your skin or paper.

Toothbrushes can harbor bacteria, viruses and fungus, says Dr. Irwin Malitz of Chicago. He recommends getting a new toothbrush if you've had a cold, cold sores or an infection; dropped it on the floor, in a contaminated bathtub or other place; or shared it with someone. Every time you brush, you remove plaque and particles, often tainting the brush with bacteria, blood, saliva and other debris. The pollution can come back to infect you. Bacteria thrive in moist environments such as the bathroom. E. coli bacteria living on your toothbrush can cause infections and death if left untreated.

Not only are older toothbrushes more likely to host bacteria, they become less helpful in cleaning bacteria in your

mouth. Sharp edges can cut gums, giving bacteria a place to thrive and cause illness or infection. Most of us replace our toothbrush once every nine months, but dentists recommend buying a new one after three months or less.

Preventing cold germs from spreading is simple. Because 3.2 million microbes per square inch may live in your toilet bowl, keep the lid down when flushing. The CDC suggests rinsing your toothbrush thoroughly after brushing and letting it air dry, standing upright. If you're still concerned or want to save money on an electric toothbrush head, you may also run your toothbrushes through the dishwasher. The dishwasher won't harm toothbrushes, and the hot water will probably kill most germs. You can also soak your toothbrush for 20 minutes in an antiseptic mouthwash, or buy a toothbrush purifier at the drugstore. Dentists recommend placing your toothbrushes at least an inch apart in the holder so that germs don't travel from one brush to another.†

†http://www.ehow.com/about_5376205_do-cold-germs-live-toothbrushes.html



Germs can flourish on a toothbrush

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Dr. William Hammerlee has been a dentist in Erie, Pennsylvania since 1984. Raised in Corry, Pennsylvania he is a graduate of Asbury College in Wilmore, Kentucky and The University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine in Pittsburgh, PA. Dr. Hammerlee is a member of the American Dental Association, the Pennsylvania Dental Association and the Erie County Dental Association, as well as a Fellow in the Academy of General Dentistry.



The contents of this newsletter are for informational purposes only. The content is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your dentist or physician or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have.

Q & A: How are your instruments sterilized?

Here at Hammerlee Dental Care, one of the utmost important things we do throughout each day is instrument sterilization. We use as many disposable products as we can, but some items, such as our instruments, are not disposable and go through sterilization. Sterilization is a process designed to kill all microbes.

After use, the instruments are bathed in a pre-soak solution. Then, they cycle through an ultrasonic cleaner to remove any debris. After the ultrasonic, the instruments are then sterilized in an autoclave which sterilizes through steam under pressure. The instruments reach a temperature of 275°F, which coupled with the pressurized steam, achieves sterilization.

The process doesn't end there. Monitoring our sterilizer to ensure it is working properly is just as important

as instrument sterilization. Our office goes the second mile here with three different safeguards to ensure proper sterilization:

1. The instruments are placed in sterilization pouches that have a visible internal indicator that changes color with sterilization heat.
2. Integrated Chemical Indicator Strips are run with our instruments through the sterilization cycle. These strips change color in response to a combination of time, temperature and the presence of steam.
3. Biological Monitoring is the ultimate verification for us. Bacterial spores are considered the most resistant type of microbe, so demonstrating their death provides the main guarantee of sterilization. We run a self-contained vial of bacterial spores and growth me-

dium through the sterilizer. We then break the internal ampule to mix the two, incubate the vial at 131°F for at least 24 hours and "read" the indicator solution.

We use multiple methods of monitoring to ensure the safety of each and every patient we treat.

For more information about this topic and other dental information, please visit our website and click the "Dental Health Online" link. If you have a question about our office that you would like to see featured in our Q&A section, please e-mail it to: linda@hammerleedentalcare.com



Biological Spore Testing System