

Hammerlee Dental Care Newsletter

www.hammerleedentalcare.com



Welcome ...

Welcome to our premier newsletter! We are so excited about the many changes at the office this year. Some of our major changes include our conversion to digital x-rays, which you can learn more about later in this issue. Our office is fully computerized now, in each treatment room. This has helped us stay on the cutting edge of technology by going chartless. Being chartless greatly increases our efficiency and accuracy, as well as improves our overall patient care. Our computers are integrated with the television monitors as well. This allows us to share our intra-oral photographs and x-ray images with our patients on a clear 22" monitor [instead of trying to show them a traditional x-ray

not much bigger than a postage stamp!]. We are proud to say that we have accomplished this state of the art transition more than six years ahead of the federal National Health Information Infrastructure [NHII] requirement. That places us among the select 1% of dental offices that are currently chartless. We have also added new, exciting technology for appointment reminders, including e-mail and text messaging. You can even confirm your appointment, or contact us directly, right from the e-mail that you receive. One of the best new changes is our website: www.hammerleedentalcare.com Our site is interactive with our office software which gives you the ability to check your sched-

uled appointments, make appointment requests, fill out forms online, provide us valuable feedback by filling out patient satisfaction surveys and so much more. You can also learn about us and the services we provide, as well as access a wealth of information by linking to Dental Health Online. Visit our website today and check out all that it has to offer.

Our office strives to provide the best patient experience possible. We are committed to keeping the practice state of the art, today and in the future.



Tips for Dental Health:

- Visit the dentist at least every six months for a professional cleaning
- Brush & floss twice daily—at least!
- Eat well-balanced meals
- Change your toothbrush at every 3 months or if you've been sick
- Use a fluoride toothpaste

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Service Spotlight— Crowns

A crown is used to entirely cover or "cap" a damaged tooth. Besides strengthening a damaged tooth, a crown can be used to improve its appearance, shape or alignment. A crown can also be placed on top of an implant to provide a tooth-like shape and structure for function.

Porcelain or ceramic crowns can be matched to the color of your natural teeth. Other materials include gold and metal alloys, acrylic and ceramic. These alloys are generally stronger than porcelain and may be recommended for back teeth. Porcelain bonded to a metal shell is often used be-

cause it is both strong and attractive.

After preparing the tooth, an impression will be taken for the dental lab, who makes your crown. A temporary crown will be placed to protect the tooth until the new permanent crown is cemented.



Digital Dental X-Ray Sensor

Digital X-rays

Digital x-ray imaging uses digital sensors instead of traditional photographic film. This exciting technology has many advantages:

Faster – the images appear immediately on our computers,

Clearer – the images are sharp, crisp and accurate. We can also enhance the images in a variety of ways to improve viewing. They are not as susceptible to marks from the development process of traditional film.

Safer – digital x-rays require

between 75% - 90% less radiation than traditional x-rays to obtain an image. This is an extraordinary benefit of the technology,

Cleaner – they do not require development like traditional films. This lets us avoid use of the chemicals required for processing, which makes the office safer and healthier, especially for the staff,

Easier – the x-ray sensor is shaped as such that most patients find the sensor far more

comfortable than the traditional rigid films.

Additionally, the images are stored electronically on our computers as a digital file. That allows us to send x-rays for insurance claims or referrals to specialists with a few clicks of the mouse. The images do not degrade over time and can be retrieved easily in the future.

The conversion to digital x-rays at our office has been an enormous benefit for all.

Children's Dental Health—Teething

Dental Trivia:
Children begin to develop their primary teeth 6 weeks after conception while in their mother's womb.

Between 4 and 7 months of age, most infants will encounter a dental milestone: their first tooth. Depending on a number of factors, your baby's first tooth may come in months earlier or later than average. Often, the first teeth to show through the gums are bottom middle teeth, followed by the top front teeth. The other teeth will continue filling in until the last set of molars emerge. By age 3, most children have a complete set of 20 baby teeth which will stay with them until their

permanent teeth begin coming in at around the age of 6. You may notice that your baby is becoming more fussy and irritable a few weeks before the first tooth breaks through their gums. Sometimes you will also see a raised bump in the gums where the tooth is coming in. Biting pressure helps to relieve some discomfort, so giving them a rubber teething ring or cold washcloth can be helpful. A bottle of cold water or chilled solid foods, such as applesauce or yogurt, may also help if

your baby can eat them. Even rubbing a clean finger gently but firmly across your baby's gums may help soothe them. There are also many topical oral pain relievers that you can buy at drug stores, but make sure to speak with your baby's doctor before using them or any pain relievers.

Due to increased drooling, some infants will develop a chin rash. Lightly wipe drool away with a soft, cotton cloth and apply a thin coating of petroleum jelly to their chin before naps or bedtime.



Jamie Badams, in Montreal



Matthew Badams aboard the Niagara

Feature Patients—Jamie Badams and Matthew Badams

Jamie and Matthew Badams are year-round volunteers for the Brig Niagara, and these brothers recently had the opportunity to sail aboard the Niagara this summer as Square Rig Seaman Trainees.

Jamie, 17, sailed for about a month from Erie to Montreal via the St.

Lawrence Seaway. He and the crew gave tours to thousands of people at their stops along the way.

Matt, 15, sailed on a 10 day trip from Erie to Put-In-Bay, Ohio. He enjoyed expanding his knowledge of the history of the Niagara and the war of 1812.

Both continue to enjoy their involvement with the Niagara and encourage others to volunteer or join the Niagara League to help preserve this local and national treasure.

Jamie & Matt live in Erie with their parents Jay & Tiffany and siblings Emma, 12 and Jack, 6.

Did You Know ...

... Dr. Hammerlee, and his wife Valerie, have four children?

Rebekah, 27, lives in Lexington, KY and teaches second grade at Russell Cave Elementary School. She is married to Dr. Zak Thobaben, a pediatric dentist. They recently welcomed a new addition ... a golden retriever puppy named Lincoln.

Adam, 24, is a second year dental

student at the University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine. He will graduate in 2012 and will most likely join his father in practice here at Hammerlee Dental Care. Adam is passionate about music and plays the guitar and piano whenever his schedule allows.

Laura, 21, is a senior at Asbury College in Wilmore, KY majoring in elementary education and Spanish

education. Laura was thrilled to have spent the first five months of 2009 studying abroad in Seville, Spain [& traveling a lot].

Sarah, 18, is a freshman at Asbury College in Wilmore, KY where she is majoring in music education. She loves to sing and play the piano and guitar. Sarah is a 2009 graduate of McDowell HS where she participated in many theater productions.



Rebekah, Adam, Laura and Sarah

Prevention Is The Key—Teeth Grinding or “Bruxism”

Stress is an unfortunate part of our everyday lives. While it's a nuisance, we learn to live with it. But with stress comes unwanted side effects that can greatly affect our health – in fact, stress has been linked to heart disease, immune-related disorders, digestive problems and ... dental problems! Actually, stress is a common contributor to teeth grinding, or the gnashing or clenching of the jaw.

Referred to by dentists as bruxism, teeth grinding applies consistent pressure on your teeth and can cause great damage, wearing teeth down until they chip, break or are lost completely. Teeth grinding commonly appears in the form of sleep bruxism, where the grinding occurs while you are sleeping. But even when teeth grinding occurs unconsciously, it can be prevented.

Although teeth grinding is habitual, many people aren't aware of their problem and often attribute their symptoms to other medical ailments. Being aware of the signs can help you diagnose the problem before significant damage occurs. The following signals may alert you to the fact you're grinding your teeth: tooth damage, including the

wearing down of enamel, broken, cracked or chipped teeth, reoccurring headaches or earaches, soreness in the jaw or muscles, or tooth sensitivity.

As with any medical ailment, you must determine the cause to eliminate the problem. In many cases, controlling bruxism means changing the behavior that triggers it. The following tips may help you defeat your teeth grinding habit:

Reduce Stress – There are several methods that people use to reduce stress, including exercise, relaxation techniques, therapy and medications. If you suffer from teeth grinding as a result of stress, talk to your doctor about the right stress reduction method for you.

Limit Caffeine and Alcohol – Stimulants and depressants have been linked to various sleep disorders. Limit caffeine and alcohol to avoid developing a habit.

Ease the Tension – Prior to going to bed, place a warm washcloth over your jaw joints, which are located in front of your ears. The heat will help soothe and relax your muscles. Massaging your jaw or using aromatherapy can also help you relax

and sleep.

Think Ergonomics – Sleep on your back to reduce the amount of pressure placed on your jaw joints. If sleeping on your back isn't an option, a contoured pillow may help relax your jaw.

Mind Over Matter – If you're grinding your teeth during the day, make yourself aware of when it happens and train yourself not to clench your jaw.

Control Your Diet – A vitamin deficiency can contribute to muscle spasms and affect motor activity. A diet rich in pantothenic acid and calcium may help prevent bruxism.

Avoid Chewing on Hard Objects or Gum – Constant chewing is habit-forming and can lead to teeth grinding.

Get a Checkup – Have your dentist check the alignment of your teeth and make sure your dental appliances are fitted properly. If you suffer from teeth grinding, talk to your dentist about having a mouth guard or night guard made. A custom-made night guard protects your teeth from grinding and provides a comfortable fit so you can sleep while you're wearing it. †

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Facial Muscles of Mastication

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excellence in a comfortable setting

† Reprinted from Futuredentics, Inc.; Online: <http://www.1800dentist.com/dental-how-to/how-to-prevent-teeth-grinding>

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 the Academy of General Dentistry.



Q & A: Does Dr. Hammerlee do silver fillings?

No. Dr. Hammerlee is committed to providing the best treatment options available to his patients and this has led him to the decision to discontinue use of the silver [mercury] fillings. Instead he uses tooth colored fillings which are sometimes referred to as composite, resin or bonding fillings.

The obvious advantage of the composites are that they cosmetically pleasing. Another advantage is that these fillings chemically bond with the tooth, whereas the metal fillings do not leaving them more prone to eventual fractures. Less tooth structure is removed when the dentist prepares the tooth, and this may result in a smaller filling than that of an amalgam.

The "white" fillings are also less thermal-sensitive than the metal fillings and are ready for use immediately after the dental appointment.

Additionally, Dr. Hammerlee has chosen not to have the mercury filling material in the office for the safety of all, and for the environment.

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:

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Silver Fillings



White Composite Filling