

In partnership with responsible patients

Smiling Matters

Issue 2

Welcome

to the second issue of our patient newsletter.

We have had a great response to our first issue and hope you enjoy this one as much.

We are delighted to be able to tell you about a new piece of hi-tech equipment that we have invested in - a Healozone. The benefits of being treated with this are that in many cases patients will no longer need to have fillings when their teeth have decay.



Healozone machine

Instead of the usual process of drilling out the decayed part of the tooth and filling the cavity, by using the Healozone, we can now treat many teeth with Ozone gas. This has the effect of killing the bacteria which causes decay. This means no injections, no drilling and no

unsightly fillings! The treatment is simple and painless and is very reasonably priced. For more information, please ask next time you visit us.

In our last issue we introduced you to our principal dentist Peter Walker, associate dentist Olivia Odell and receptionist Laura Bown. This time our cover stars are associate dentist Fiona Patch, Fiona's dental nurse Susan Dixon and hygienist Suzanne Masters. We hope you enjoy reading about them.



Fiona Patch

Fiona qualified at Glasgow University in 1991. She spent a year completing her vocational training in Portsmouth before swapping the British sea for the Australian skies, where she spent some time working with a team of flying doctors carrying out emergency dental work.

She joined us two years ago. She really enjoys helping patients to feel more confident about their smile, through both aesthetic work such as teeth whitening and veneers and more routine dental care.

She also enjoys helping them combat a variety of aches and pains through acupuncture treatments, which can help with sinusitis, hay fever, stress, headaches, and back and shoulder pain.

When not working at the practice, Fiona relaxes by going rock climbing and scuba diving.

Susan Dixon

Susan joined our practice at the same time as Fiona and has worked as her nurse ever since. She used to work in the marketing department of one of the UK's largest high-tech companies before deciding on a major career change to become a dental nurse instead.

She says she really enjoys working with Fiona and helping anxious patients to feel more relaxed about their dental treatment.

In the summer she loves getting on her wet suit to go water skiing and she also enjoys keeping fit at her local gym.



Suzanne Masters

Suzanne is one of our two hygienists. She qualified from Guys Hospital in June 2001 and joined us six months later.

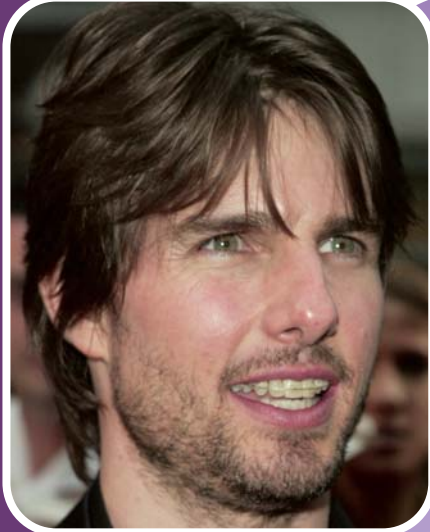
Suzanne's goal is to provide patients with a good and achievable oral hygiene routine. She is keen to stress to her patients how important it is to care for teeth and gums properly to avoid gum disease - the major cause of tooth loss in adults.

Suzanne is currently very busy arranging her wedding in August. When not pouring over bridal magazines and wedding plans, she likes joining in with fitness classes at the gym and meeting up with her friends.

Did You Know?

If you are right-handed, you tend to chew on the right-hand side of your mouth.
If you are left-handed then you tend to chew on the left-hand side of your mouth.

Straightening out your teeth



Actor Tom Cruise

One of the growing number of adults turning to braces to perfect their smile

Many people have crooked or overcrowded teeth, but until recently having them straightened by orthodontics has only been seen as an option for children or teenagers.

Nowadays, however, adults are realising the advantages of having their teeth straightened out, and wearing braces has become increasingly common amongst those in their 20's, 30's and beyond.

Part of the reason for the surge in popularity of orthodontics is that a **bright, confident smile is increasingly seen as important in today's image-conscious society.** But another reason is the improved methods available, and the fact that, to some extent, the style of braces you wear can be chosen to reflect your lifestyle and personality.

For example, the traditional "train-track" type of braces has been given a facelift - children can now opt for specific colours, or even a rainbow effect, while adults can go for virtually invisible lines across their teeth.

And in some instances **'invisible' braces can be worn.** These are tough, clear plastic aligners, which are made to fit completely over the teeth. They have to be removed for eating, brushing, etc, but as they are made from clear plastic they are virtually invisible.

Orthodontic problems - crooked or overcrowded teeth - are often inherited or can be acquired through thumb-sucking, or premature loss of baby or permanent teeth. Apart from the way they look, such teeth can be hard to keep clean and maintain, and can contribute to increased dental decay, gum disease and tooth loss.

Straightened, well-aligned teeth, on the other hand, look far better, enhancing your smile significantly and often improving your facial profile too. They can **make you feel far more confident,** and are easier to keep clean and healthy. Straightening your teeth takes an average of around 18-24 months to complete the treatment, and it requires a high degree of commitment as you usually have to wear the braces all of the time.

However people usually feel that the results are well worth the time and effort they put into it, and help them to **smile with confidence for the rest of their life.**

If you think you might benefit from orthodontic treatment, please ask about it next time you visit.

Ouch! Sensitive Teeth

- the causes and what might help

Do you wince with pain every time you treat yourself to an ice-cream, or find that hot food and drink gives you toothache? If so, you could be one of the many people who have sensitive teeth.

The most common time to suffer from sensitive teeth is when eating or drinking something cold, or from cold air catching your teeth. Some people suffer similar symptoms when consuming hot, sweet or acidic food or drink. The pain can last just a few seconds, or several hours.

Teeth become sensitive when the dentine, which is the layer of tooth beneath the enamel, becomes exposed. This usually happens near the gum line, where the enamel is thinner.



Causes of sensitive teeth include a cracked tooth or filling; gum recession (where the gums shrink back away from the teeth) as a result of gum disease; tooth abrasion caused by brushing teeth too hard; and dental erosion, where acid from acidic food or drink eats away at the tooth.

If you suffer from sensitive teeth, special toothpastes can be bought from most pharmacies and supermarkets. Use them instead of your normal toothpaste - they do need to be used regularly to be effective. Also, don't rinse your teeth - the toothpaste works better if it is left on.

If you have noticed no improvement after a few weeks, then please do arrange to come and see us. We can carry out a thorough check to see what is causing the sensitivity and find the best way of treating it.

Did You Know?

Elizabeth I had to have all her teeth removed, apparently because of her love of sweets. Once they were removed, she refused to appear in public without padding out her mouth with wads of cotton to maintain a more normal, younger-looking, face shape.

Giving your smile the wow factor

A perfect, pearly-white smile used to be reserved for the very lucky or Hollywood stars. But thanks to advances in dental techniques and an increasing desire to make the most of our looks, it is fast becoming a must-have on this side of the Atlantic.

Many of our home-grown music and film stars are said to have invested thousands in perfecting their smile, and Tom Cruise seems to be almost as famous for his dental braces now as he is for his film roles.

Having a great smile is no longer limited to the wealthy or celebrities. Modern dental procedures mean that we can work with you to create a cosmetic treatment plan which will not only take into account your needs and the condition of your teeth and gums, but will also allow for your lifestyle and budget.

So how can you improve your teeth and give your smile the "wow" factor?

First of all, it is vital to take good care of your teeth and gums as these form the foundation of a fabulous smile.

You can do this by following basic oral healthcare routines such as brushing twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste, especially at bedtime, and cleaning between your teeth using floss or interdental brushes.

One of the most popular cosmetic treatments available is tooth whitening. Teeth can easily become stained from everyday use, especially from tea, coffee, red wine, fried foods and smoking. They also get darker with age.

Having them whitened can remove stains and, if you have left your younger days behind you, can take years off your appearance.

There are also solutions available for most dental problems these days.

Gaps, cracked or misshapen teeth can be fixed with veneers - an extremely thin porcelain covering for teeth which is best described as being like a false fingernail for teeth.

Missing teeth can be replaced in several ways, including implants and bridges which can provide a long-lasting, natural-looking

and more comfortable alternative to dentures. They can also help prevent the aged, drawn-in look which can happen around the mouth when teeth are missing.

If teeth need to be restored, modern crowns and fillings should make it virtually impossible to distinguish re-built teeth from natural whole ones.

If you would like to know more about how you could improve your smile, please give us a call or speak to us next time you visit.



Even if you take a lot of care in looking after your teeth you can sometimes lose a tooth or part of it. This can be as a result of an accident - it may be broken or knocked out - or it may simply be weakened by decay or wear and tear.

But the loss of all or part of a tooth does not mean you have to cope with a permanent gap in your teeth, nor does it necessarily mean that you have to start wearing dentures. There are a number of options which may be available to you.

If a tooth is broken and/or too weak to support an ordinary filling then often the best option for replacing it may be a crown. This is a **natural looking replacement tooth** that

fits over the existing tooth, and is usually made from porcelain. Each crown is individually crafted by specialist dental technicians so it is a perfect fit and colour match for your other teeth.

For a **completely missing tooth, a bridge or an implant may be the answer.** A bridge is made by fitting a replacement tooth in the gap, using the teeth on either side to support it. They can be very long-lasting but do require careful cleaning to avoid problems like bad breath and gum disease.

Implants are long-lasting tooth replacements. The implant is a titanium 'root' fitted into the jaw bone, and has the advantage that it does not rely on neighbouring teeth for support. A crown can then be fitted onto the implant to replace the missing tooth.

When A Tooth Can't
Be Filled Any More

If you would like to know more about how you could improve your smile, please give us a call or speak to us next time you visit.

Did You Know?

Some scientists believe that humans were using toothpicks 1.8 million years ago. Curved grooves found on many ancient teeth are said to indicate that they used grass stalks to clean between their teeth.

However much care we take, it is sometimes impossible to spot every potential problem when carrying out an examination. Sometimes a tooth can appear healthy, but may have decay under the enamel coating, or have problems around the root, under the gum.

X-rays – Revealing the Facts

are not needed each time - the frequency varies according to the overall health of your mouth and gums.

As well as showing decay, they can detect other problems with the teeth and bones, show infections in the roots, and highlight signs of gum disease. They can also show any teeth that haven't come through yet. This means that in children the dentist can see if there is enough space for the teeth to come through, and in adults it can show potential problems with wisdom teeth.

There are three main types of X-rays commonly used in dentistry. A bitewing X-ray shows the areas in between the teeth and is used mainly to detect decay. A periapical X-ray shows the area around the root of a tooth and is used to diagnose problems in this area. Panoramic X-rays show all of the jaw and teeth and are used when examining a new patient or when a full-mouth view is needed.

Some people worry about having X-rays because of the radiation in a dental X-ray. However the amount of radiation involved is tiny - a fraction of that used for a chest X-ray - and we only take X-rays when we feel they are absolutely necessary to maintain the health of your mouth.

We hope this article has answered any questions you may have had about X-rays, but if you have any further queries please ask next time you visit us.



This is why X-rays form such a vital part of the check-up process. They can detect a whole host of potential issues, which can save you from a lot of unnecessary pain, treatment and cost.

X-rays are usually taken if you are a new patient unless you have had some taken very recently by your previous dentist. It helps the dentist to assess the condition of your mouth and check for hidden problems. They are also taken as part of the examination routine, but

questions & answers

Q. Why does the dentist always ask if I'm taking any medication? Why is it important for them to know?

A. It is vital for us to know what medication you are taking, so we can be sure that any medicines we prescribe or local anaesthetics we use will not interfere with your current medication. It can also help explain anything unusual that we see in your mouth - for example some medications can cause you to have a dry mouth. We also need to know what medical conditions you suffer from, for similar reasons. New patients are usually asked to complete a form giving this information when they join the practice, and if anything changes it is always important to let us know.

Q. How does toothpaste work, and why are there so many different types available?

A. Toothpastes are a fairly complex mix of ingredients, including abrasive, detergent, thickener, moisturiser, water, flavouring, colouring and sweeteners. The abrasive is what can give toothpastes a slightly gritty texture. Its job is to remove plaque, remnants of food and

stains, and to polish your teeth. Detergents loosen food remnants and plaque so they can be removed by your toothbrush, and the other ingredients bind the mixture together, and make it look and taste nice.

The different types that are available cater to different people's needs. Most contain fluoride to help further protect teeth from decay, and many contain antibacterials such as triclosan to help prevent plaque from forming. Others can contain desensitising compounds for sensitive teeth, or additives to help stop plaque from sticking to teeth, to help combat bad breath or to whiten teeth. Some are marketed as stain removing toothpastes, and contain stronger abrasives, but many of these are not recommended by us for regular use as they can wear teeth and cause gum recession. If you are unsure which to choose, please ask us next time you visit.



Articles contained within this newsletter are provided for information only and should not be taken as a recommendation for any specific dental treatment or procedure. For further advice contact the dental practice.

© This newsletter is written and produced by Blue Horizons Limited, 122 Bath Road, Cheltenham, GL53 7JX.



Edited in association with the British Dental Health Foundation