

## DENTAL CARE – WHAT WE WANT YOU TO KNOW

With recent research implicating dental disease as a risk factor for many life threatening illnesses, we feel it is important for every patient to understand their dental health and possible consequences of neglecting dental care.

**Preventive care, periodontal disease, and health risks:** If hardened plaque (called calculus) is not removed at the dentist's office regularly, periodontal disease will develop, and **patients with periodontal disease show double the risk of heart attacks and up to triple the risk of stroke when compared to those without the disease.** Your teeth should be examined and scaled every six months; if you have any periodontal problems, they should be scaled at three month intervals. While we will try to help you remember when you are due for a cleaning, it is your responsibility to make sure that you do not neglect your continuing care.

**Oral Cancer:** Oral cancer is sixth most deadly form of cancer, primarily because lesions are not found at an early enough stage for successful treatment. If found early, the treatment has a 90% change of eliminating the cancer. We utilize advanced oral cancer screening methods on all adults that enable us to find lesions at an early stage. This test at present is generally not covered by insurance and will involve an extra cost to the patient. You have the right to refuse this test.

**X-rays:** We will be providing you with a risk assessment for dental disease, including cavities and periodontal disease, along with any risks related to your overall health. If you are at high risk, we will be taking x-rays of problem areas yearly until your risk is lowered.

**Dental decay and periodontal disease are infections:** Periodontal disease bacteria can enter the bloodstream, affecting your immune system, and causing increased risks of heart disease and stroke, as mentioned above. The bacteria that cause dental decay do not cause the systemic problems that periodontal bacteria do, but if decay is left untreated, an abscess can form and can spread to areas outside the mouth. This can be life threatening if the abscess spreads to the brain.

**Anesthesia:** We use local anesthesia for many dental procedures. Complications are rare, but could include soreness at the injection site, a reaction to epinephrine, or possible temporary stiffness or swelling at the injection site. If you have high blood pressure, glaucoma, have had past epinephrine reactions, or could be pregnant, you need to inform us before dental work is performed since those conditions require use of an anesthetic without epinephrine.

**Filling materials:** We use tooth colored composite for most fillings. Because the filling material is hardened before anesthesia wears off, there is a chance (about 4%) that an additional visit may be required for adjustment. Composite materials require a completely dry, saliva free field for a bond to form to the tooth. There is a chance (about 1%) that the filling may have to be redone if the bond does not form successfully. Insurance companies may pay benefits on back teeth only for silver amalgam fillings. This may result in additional cost to you.

I acknowledge discussion of the above topics and have been given an opportunity to ask questions.

**Patient Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Staff Member Signature** \_\_\_\_\_