

Unveiling the mystery of the dental examination

Like many other businesses, dentistry has its own terminology that we use every day, which makes very little sense to anyone else! For example, you may wonder what all the numbers are about, how teeth can possibly have pockets, and what on earth terms like mesial and distal mean.



In fact, once you know what they mean, it all becomes fairly straightforward. The numbers that we use so often simply identify each individual tooth. We make a chart of your teeth, making a note of what treatment you have had on each tooth and whether any are missing. This enables us to keep track of what is happening inside your mouth, and what needs to be done.

If a tooth needs filling, we need to enter that on the chart too. The name we use for it depends on which surface(s) of the tooth are involved. These names include mesial (furthest front), distal (furthest back), and buccal (next to the cheek). We may abbreviate these, especially if more than one surface is affected.

During your examination, we will also check for gum disease. Gum disease often goes unnoticed by patients in the early stages, but if left untreated it can lead to sore, swollen or bleeding gums and bad breath. Eventually, it can even cause tooth loss.

One of the indicators of gum disease is that the gums start to separate from the teeth and form “pockets”. The depth of these pockets gives an indication of how severe the gum disease is. Generally, the pockets should be 3mm or less and anything over that indicates that the health of your gums needs to be improved, by visiting our hygienist and improving your oral healthcare routine at home.

All patients at Stricklands are scored for gum health during their examinations. The BPE (Basic Periodontal Examination) scores are used to compute your risk status for gum disease – this can be very different from your risk of dental decay.

Depending on your individual needs, we can then prescribe appropriate periodontal (gum-related) therapy with our hygienist and/or our in-house periodontist, Dr Shaun Greaves.

In our next issue, we will look more closely at the causes, symptoms and treatment of gum disease, and will explain why it is so important to visit our hygienists as often as we recommend.

Upgrading of doors and lighting

We have recently upgraded all relevant doors to meet the new fire regulatory requirements, which also include emergency lighting. Thank you all for your patience whilst this extensive work was being carried out.

Helping you through the credit crunch!

Many of our patients have commented on the rising cost of living at the moment – fuel, food and petrol prices alone are making a big difference to many of us.

We want to make it as easy as possible for our patients to keep their teeth and gums healthy and looking good, and so do our best to offer affordable dental care and budget-friendly payment schemes.

Many of our patients have taken up membership of our dental fitness plan. This gives you a number of benefits, including easy monthly payments which cover routine examinations and hygiene appointments, plus worldwide

emergency cover, and a **substantial discount** on any further treatment that is needed. Our ‘Kool Kids Klub’ for children offers similar benefits.

We still have a limited number of spaces available on these plans – please ask for more details.

For those who prefer to pay as they go, we also offer interest-free credit to help pay for unexpected crown and bridgework, implants or for smile enhancements. Details are available on request.

Finally, we would urge our patients not to cut back on their dental expenditure if your budget is tight. It is vital to keep your mouth in good condition, and to visit us regularly. Spotting potential problems early means you can save both time and money. In some cases, such as mouth cancer, it can even save your life.

STRICKLANDS

Dental Fitness Centre

MOUTHPIECE

Second orthodontist joins our team!

We are very excited and proud to welcome Dr James Grant to our specialist team. James will be seeing new orthodontic patients of all ages and will be working in parallel with Dr Helen Jones.

He is a senior registrar in orthodontics and is on a consultant career pathway. He will combine his hospital time with working with us on Wednesday evenings and Saturday mornings.

James is local, having been a patient at Stricklands as a child. He and his wife, Ruth, have 2 children: Ed and Kiriana.

As far as we know, we are the only multiple, specialist centre with two orthodontists in the country.



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Lollipop fights tooth decay

It sounds almost too good to be true – a lollipop that tastes nice and is actually good for your teeth. But it is the latest invention from the States, pioneered by microbiologist and dentistry professor Wenyuan Shi. The orange flavoured lolly contains a liquorice extract which kills the primary bacteria that cause tooth decay.



Why your medication matters

We are often asked why we need to know about patients' medical conditions and what medication they are taking. The simple answer is that it helps us treat you safely.

We need to know any regular medications you take, and any others that you have taken recently. These include the contraceptive pill, inhalers, antibiotics, over-the-counter medication and recreational drugs.

This helps you and us avoid any potential problems. For example, some antibiotics can make the contraceptive pill less effective, so you will need to take extra precautions for a while.

Knowing your medical history helps us understand any signs and symptoms seen in your mouth, and help you with any side-effects from your medication. These can include common issues such as dry mouth or ulceration.

In some cases, we spot signs of illnesses that you are not unaware of, and can advise you to see your doctor. **If your health or medication changes, please do let us know, or give us a call so we can update your records.**



Beckham's smile is a winner!

British football icon David Beckham has one of the best celebrity smiles in the world, according to a new survey.

He was beaten to the prestigious top male smile spot only by film star Brad Pitt, and in fact was the only non-film star to be awarded the accolade.

The survey was carried out among members of the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry, who voted actress and super model Eva Mendes' smile the most gorgeous and glamorous of them all.

These days it isn't just high-earning celebrities who can have fantastic smiles. Modern techniques and materials mean that anyone can have their smile enhanced, often at a much smaller cost than they might think.

Tooth whitening can have a big impact on your smile and your confidence, lightening teeth and helping to erase stains caused by smoking or drinking tea, coffee or red wine. And because teeth tend to darken with age, having lighter teeth can also make you look younger!

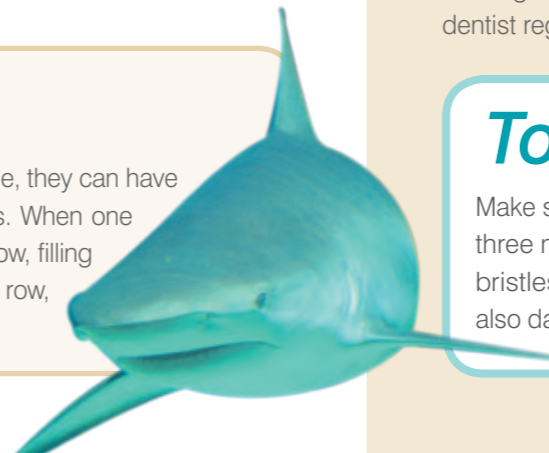
Other treatments include dental veneers, which can disguise a number of imperfections, and dental implants which are strong, realistic replacements for one or more missing teeth.

To find out how you could have a winning smile, please call us to book a consultation.



Sharks' teeth

It's no wonder sharks are so widely feared – at any one time, they can have up to 300 teeth! The teeth are arranged in about five rows. When one is damaged or lost, all the teeth behind it move forward a row, filling the gap at the front. A new tooth then grows in the back row, so the shark is never left toothless.



'Exercise to keep your teeth'

Experts say that people who don't exercise, are overweight and have unhealthy eating habits have a greater chance of developing advanced gum disease and losing their teeth.

A new study shows those who stayed fit and healthy were 40% less likely to develop the condition. Now the British Dental Health Foundation is urging people to take better care of themselves.

Chief Executive Dr Nigel Carter said: "People see the health of their mouth and the health of their body as two very different things, but it is becoming increasingly clear that this just isn't the case.

"We already know that poor oral health can have a negative effect on the rest of your body, and the fact that gum disease increases your chances of developing heart disease, heart attacks, diabetes, strokes and low birth weight babies needs to be taken very seriously indeed."

Other ways of helping to avoid gum disease include brushing your teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste, cleaning between your teeth and around the gumline, cutting down on sugary food and drinks and visiting the dentist regularly.

Top tooth tip

Make sure you replace your toothbrush at least every three months, or after an illness. Worn and broken bristles can harbour germs and bacteria, and can also damage your gums.

