

## Gum disease

In our last issue, we looked at some of the terminology we use during your dental examination, and explained what it meant. In this issue, we are taking that a step further, and looking in greater depth at the periodontal (gum) part of your regular examination.

'Periodontal' refers to the area around your teeth – the gums, bones and ligaments that support them. These are essential to help you keep your teeth for life, but can be damaged by bacterial infection, which causes periodontal (gum) disease.

Gum disease is very common and can affect just one tooth or many. In its early stages it can often go unnoticed, with patients only becoming aware of it when the initial symptoms start to show, including sore, swollen or bleeding gums and bad breath. If left untreated it can cause irreversible damage, eventually causing tooth loss.

Gum disease is also increasingly being linked with other health issues, including heart disease, diabetes and premature births.

During your regular examination, we look closely at the soft tissue surrounding your teeth, on a tooth by tooth basis. Gum disease causes your gums to shrink away, or recede, from your teeth, which creates "pockets" which become infected with harmful bacteria.

We carry out our gum examinations using the standard Basic Periodontal Examination (BPE) guidelines, in which every section of your mouth is given a 'score' or code. These range from 0, where there is no evidence of gum recession or bleeding, to 4, where the 'pockets' are more than 5.5mm deep.

Patients who score a 4 usually need to be referred for treatment to our in-house periodontal specialist Dr Shaun Greaves. Some patients who score a 3 may also need to be referred for specialist treatment, especially if they are smokers, are pregnant, or suffer from certain medical conditions that make them more vulnerable to periodontal problems.

Patients whose scores are 1-3 are usually referred to our hygienist, who will clean your teeth professionally to remove harmful bacteria which cannot be removed with normal brushing. She will also tell you how best to care for your teeth and gums, including dietary advice and instructions on how to clean your teeth effectively.

## Revamped bathrooms

We constantly look for ways to improve the practice and the care we provide. This extends to all areas of the practice. Our latest project has been the revamping of our bathrooms. We even have our own green room now.

We believe that it is important to keep the practice up-to-date to ensure a comfortable and pleasant experience for our patients when they visit.

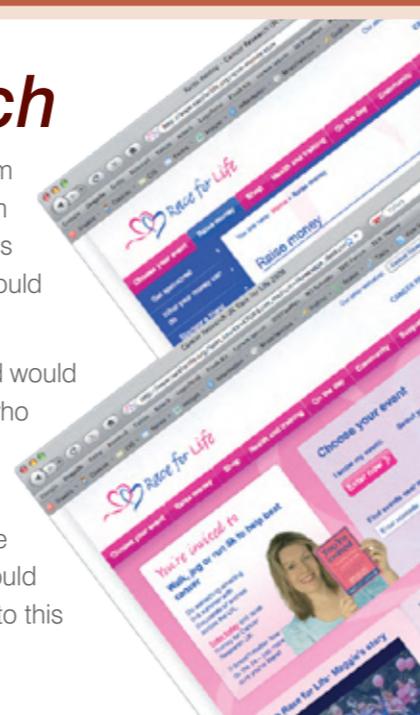
If you have any suggestions as to other improvements that we can make then please let us know.

## Cancer Research

Around a dozen members of our practice team are taking part in the Race for Life – a 5km run to raise money for Cancer Research. This is taking place in Guildford on 7th June. We would like to wish them the best of luck with this.

The team has been raising lots of money and would like to say a big thank you to everyone who is supporting them.

If you would like to sponsor our runners please ask at reception. Alternatively please visit [www.cancerresearchuk.org](http://www.cancerresearchuk.org) if you would like more information or to make a donation to this very worthy cause.



## MOUTHPIECE

### Thank you for your continued support

We would like to thank all our patients for the trust and loyalty you place in us – we really appreciate it, especially in the current economic climate. Please keep visiting us regularly so that we can keep a close eye on your teeth and gums and keep you smiling with confidence. Spotting any potential problems at an early stage can save you unnecessary time and expense. During your check-up we look for signs of mouth cancer; early detection could save your life.

**We are also grateful to those of you who have recommended friends and family to the practice, and continue to offer a warm welcome to anyone you feel would benefit from our services.**





## Energy drinks: friend or foe?

A harmless boost of energy when you need it most, or is there more to the average energy drink? Marketed as performance-enhancing, they are now commonly found in athletes' kit bags and used by students to keep them awake so they can study for longer.

But dentists are concerned about the effect they are having on people's teeth.

The drinks usually contain citric acid, which can cause erosion of teeth, where the outer protective layer, the enamel, is worn away, causing sensitivity and lasting damage.

They also often contain the equivalent of up to five teaspoons of sugar, which means if they are sipped or drunk too frequently they can cause tooth decay.

If you want to use these drinks there are ways in which you can minimise the damage caused to your teeth. For example, you should drink them as quickly as possible, preferably through a straw. They also tend to do less damage to teeth if they are cold, straight from the fridge.

Overall, however, from a dental perspective there is really no better alternative than good old-fashioned water. And if you use the tap variety, it's also a lot cheaper!

### Top tooth tip

If you feel the need to pick your teeth after a meal, make sure you use a proper dental tool such as a dental stick, floss or an interdental brush. Using anything else, even cocktail sticks, might cause damage to your teeth and gums.



## Canine teeth?

In the middle ages, people believed that they could prevent tooth decay by using a mouth rinse made from dogs teeth boiled in wine. Fortunately modern mouthwashes are much more palatable, as well as much more effective!



## Getting the most... ...from your dentist



We want to build a great working relationship with all our patients, so we can provide you with the treatments that are best suited to you and your needs.

We are always happy to talk with you about any problems or worries you may have, and to explain any different treatment options so you can make the right decision for you, your lifestyle and your budget.

The best time to talk with us is when you visit for a check-up. Tell us if you are not happy with your smile – we can make suggestions on how to improve it. Many clients are pleasantly surprised at just how achievable and affordable treatment can be.

If you are having any trouble with anything – toothache, bleeding gums, jaw pain, etc, please let us know so we can pay extra attention to the problem areas during our examination.

We will always explain what is involved with different treatment options, but if there is something you are unsure of please don't be embarrassed to ask. Similarly, if you need time to think something over, just say so.

## Great news for chocaholics!



At last – someone has developed a chocolate that is friendly to teeth, so you will no longer have to feel quite so guilty when you indulge your sweet tooth.

The new tooth-friendly chocolates have been created by two Belgian chocolate companies, using chocolate which has been awarded a 'Happy tooth' label by non-profit dental health organisation, Toothfriendly International.

The chocolate has been developed using a special production process and unique ingredients, such as natural sugar isomaltulose instead of refined sugar and milk proteins instead of milk powder.

## Men & smile makeovers

**More men than ever are investing in smile enhancements, according to a recent UK survey.**

The British Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry found that almost 40% of all cosmetic dental treatments carried out in the UK were on men, a noticeable difference on the previous year.

The most popular procedures for men were white fillings, crowns, veneers and tooth whitening, with an increasing move towards less invasive procedures that enabled patients to keep more of their natural tooth.

The survey also showed that orthodontic treatment (tooth straightening) has leapt in popularity, with almost three times as many procedures being carried out. Over half of these used removable and often virtually invisible appliances, which are becoming increasingly popular.

