

# Quarterly Newsletter



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## Happy New Year!

We wish each of you a very prosperous 2008! We are looking forward to caring for you, your family members, and your friends this year.

As 2008 begins, we would like to remind our patients who are high school or college age and need wisdom teeth removed that it is imperative that you contact the oral surgeon's office as soon as possible. Most students like to have their wisdom teeth removed during the summer months. Unfortunately many wait until the last minute to schedule. The surgeon will want to see both child and parent for a consultation visit in advance of the extraction appointment. You should call and schedule those appointments now.



## Alopecia Areata

### What is alopecia areata?

Alopecia areata is a hair-loss condition which usually affects the scalp. It can, however, sometimes affect other areas of the body. Hair loss tends to be rather rapid and often involves one side of the head more than the other. This type of hair loss is different than male-pattern baldness, an inherited condition.

With alopecia the immune system attacks the hair follicles and disrupts normal hair formation. Biopsies of affected skin show immune cells inside of the hair follicles where they are not normally present. What causes this is unknown.

For 50% of people with this condition, hair will regrow within a year without any treatment. The longer the period of time of hair loss, the less likelihood that the hair will regrow. A variety of treatments can be tried but have not been proven to be of benefit.

Dr. Dorgan suffers from this condition and has opted to shave his head. We included a picture of his new look in our last newsletter and found that many of our patients were concerned with his health. We hope this explanation places everyone's mind at ease.



## Oral Cancer Detection

Oral cancer strikes an estimated 34,360 Americans each year. Only half of all patients diagnosed with oral cancer survive more than 5 years. Dr. Dorgan's father was diagnosed with oral cancer after Lisa discovered a lesion on the side of his tongue. He passed away shortly thereafter.

Oral cancer screening is a routine part of a dental examination. You are receiving an oral cancer screening at each of your dental check-ups in our office.

Oral cancer often starts as a tiny, unnoticed white or red spot or sore anywhere in the mouth. It can affect any area of the oral cavity including the lips, gum tissue, tongue and

hard or soft palate.

Other signs include a sore that bleeds easily or does not heal, a color change of the oral tissues, a lump, thickening, rough spot, or small eroded area, pain, tenderness, or numbness anywhere in the mouth or on the lips.

Oral cancer most often occurs in those who use tobacco in any form. Alcohol use combined with smoking greatly increases risk. 25% of oral cancer patients have no known risk factors.

Oral cancer is more likely to strike after age 40. Studies suggest that diets high in fruits and vegetables may prevent the development of potentially cancerous lesions.

The best way to prevent oral cancer is to avoid tobacco and alcohol use. Regular dental check-ups, including an examination of the entire mouth are essential in the early detection of cancerous and pre-cancerous conditions.

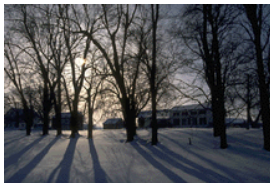
There are new tools available to detect oral cancer and pre-cancerous conditions. None of this is currently covered by dental insurance. We would like an idea of how many patients might be interested in an early detection test. Please speak with Marchia or Lisa at your next cleaning about this matter.

## Metal Filling Replacement

Silver or amalgam fillings are a creature of the past in Dr. Dorgan's office. In fact, Dr. Dorgan has not placed a metal filling in over 15 years.

Amalgam fillings are not bonded to the surrounding tooth structure. They are held in place by retention. The metal filling provides no support to the surrounding tooth structure leaving the tooth in a weakened state.

Teeth with metal fillings are at



risk for recurrent decay. Because there is no bond between the tooth structure and the filling there is gap or a void (be it ever so small) allowing microscopic leakage. Bacteria are being pumped down into that void on a constant basis.

We have found that about 40% of all silver fillings have recurrent decay or cracks in the tooth structure. Due to limits placed on x-ray and

radiation usage, our ability to detect decay under metal filling is almost impossible until the area of decay becomes so large that the nerve may be affected. Once the nerve is affected, treatment will involve root canal therapy followed by a crown or extraction and replacement of the tooth both of which can be very expensive.

Be proactive about metal filling replacement!

### **DATES OF IMPORTANCE**

- Monday January 21st Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday
- Tuesday February 12th Lincoln's Birthday
- Monday February 18th Washington's Birthday & Presidents Day
- Friday February 29th Leap Day
- Sunday March 9th Daylight Saving Time Begins
- Sunday March 16th Palm Sunday
- Monday March 17th St. Patrick's Day
- Thursday March 20th Spring Begins
- Friday March 21st Good Friday
- Sunday March 23rd Easter Sunday

