

SKYLINE DENTAL, LLC

OFFICE NEWSLETTER

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DENTAL NEWS & INFORMATION

CANCER CARE

(Excerpts from the American Dental Association & Academy of General Dentistry Website)

An estimated 400,000 of the 1.2 million Americans diagnosed with cancer each year may develop painful and debilitating oral complications from their cancer treatment. Person who undergo cancer treatment are sometimes unaware that a dental examination is a critical step in maintaining their overall health.

Patients diagnosed with cancer have special needs when it comes to their dental treatment. It is important for patients and their dentists to discuss dental treatment, its unique aspects during cancer treatment, and what effects cancer and cancer treatment can have on the patient's mouth.

HOW DOES CANCER AND ITS TREATMENT AFFECT THE MOUTH?

Cancer – no matter where in the body it occurs, can affect teeth, gums, salivary glands and other tissues in the mouth.

Chemotherapy and radiation treatment can affect the mouth, causing side effects that may include:

- Pain in the mouth and gums
- Mouth sores
- Dry mouth
- Tooth decay
- Burning or swollen tongue
- Jaw stiffness
- Problems eating, speaking and swallowing
- Decreased ability to taste
- Gum disease and bleeding
- Weakened immune system

WHAT SHOULD A PATIENT DO BEFORE BEGINNING CANCER TREATMENT?

It is important for you to schedule a thorough dental exam at least a month or perhaps several weeks before cancer treatment begins. You should be sure to update your medical history at our office and tell us about your diagnosis, medications and treatments.

HOW SHOULD CANCER PATIENTS CARE FOR THEIR MOUTHS?

Patients who have cancer should continue a regular oral hygiene program, including brushing teeth and gums with a soft bristle brush two or three times per day. If the bristles are too hard, you can either rinse the toothbrush in hot water for 15 seconds or switch to an ultra-soft toothbrush. Use a mild-tasting toothpaste because flavored pastes might irritate your mouth. If toothpaste is irritating your mouth, you can rinse with a solution of salt & water. You can also use an antibacterial mouth rinse for gum disease, but avoid mouth rinses that contain alcohol. Gently floss at least once per day.

WHAT CAN PATIENTS DO ABOUT DRY MOUTH?

Cancer patients who experience dry mouth should clean their mouths and teeth at least three times per day and floss at least once per day. If there are areas of bleeding or soreness on the gums, floss gently or avoid flossing those areas altogether. Cancer patients need to use a fluoride toothpaste when brushing their teeth and apply a fluoride gel if and when recommended by the dentist. Patients also can rinse their mouths several times per day with a solution of baking soda and salt in warm water, followed by rinsing with water.

There are other helpful hints in dealing with Dry Mouth in the March/April 2009 issue of our Office Newsletter which can be found by clicking on the 'Newsletter' link on our website: www.SkylineDentalLLC.com.

WHAT SHOULD A CANCER PATIENT EAT?

Because of the changes in the ability to taste, patients who are undergoing cancer treatment may find it more difficult to eat the foods they are used to eating. Cancer patients should eat a balanced diet, including soft, moist foods like cooked cereal, mashed potatoes, and scrambled eggs; or other recommendations made by their physician. It is important for patients undergoing cancer treatment to get the right amount of nutrients and calories.

If needed, patients can take vitamin supplements that provide healthy minerals and calories. Avoid using tobacco and drinking alcohol during treatment. Acidic foods, such as grapefruit, orange juice and tomato sauce, may cause irritation to the soft tissues of the mouth. Patients also should avoid acidic, high-sugar beverages like soda and energy drinks.

OFFICE NEWS & HAPPENINGS

Your Child's Dental Health

Regular visits to the Dentist help reinforce good brushing, flossing and other healthy oral habits for children. We can start seeing kids as soon as their teeth appear; to discuss proper care of the teeth, diet/nutrition, prevention and fluoride. Feel free to bring your youngsters along with you on your cleaning appointments, so they can get a ride in the chair and see for themselves that going to the dentist can be easy and fun.

Our New Redecorated Downstairs Waiting Room

We hope you will enjoy our newly redecorated downstairs Waiting Room. Not that we like to make a habit of letting you sit and wait ... but it should hopefully make your visit to our office a bit more relaxing and comfortable.

\$20 Gift Certificates for your Referrals

As a token of appreciation to our existing patients, we will be mailing a Gift Certificate good for a *\$20 credit at our office*; when a New Patient to our office lists your name as the referral source to our dental practice (full details at our Front Desk).

We appreciate our existing patients and would welcome your extended family and friends into our practice. Feel free to refer your family and friends to our website (www.SkylineDentalLLC.com) for an overview of our practice, services and policies.

Please check with our Front Office for additional details and limitations about our Referral Appreciation Credit.