

# Oral Health Report

A newsletter for the patients of Pankey Institute trained dentists

Vol. 4, No. 2



*A not-for-profit educational foundation dedicated to improving the oral health care of the world's citizens*

## Inside this Issue

Dairy products promote oral health...page 2

Porcelain crowns... page 3



Is this the year to improve your smile?... page 4

## Ask the Dentist

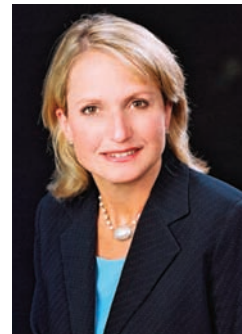
### Why do I have a dry mouth?

*Contributed by Dr. Nancy Ward, Baltimore, MD*

As many as 33 percent of adult Americans have signs of reduced salivary flow resulting in dryness of the mouth. This is called "Xerostomia" (pronounced "zero-sto-m e - a h " ) . There are many causes, and it can affect a person's quality of life by negatively affecting taste and speech and by increasing risk of dental caries (cavities). It is not part of the normal aging process.

Without saliva, it is difficult to speak, chew, swallow, and digest foods. Dentures become difficult to retain. Some patients experience pain and burning sensation.

Although Xerostomia is not a disease it can be a symptom of some diseases. For example, auto-immune diseases can cause dry mouth and dry eyes. Other common causes are cancer treatment involving chemotherapy and radiation, endocrine disorders, diabetes, hypertension, anxiety, depression, nutritional deficiencies, and nerve damage of the head and neck.



*Dr. Nancy Ward has been practicing dentistry in Baltimore since 1981. She is a member of the Dean's faculty of the University of Maryland Dental School and on the visiting faculty of The Pankey Institute. She also serves on the Institute's Board of Directors.*

Occasionally, a salivary duct will become blocked. Injury to the salivary duct or gland can lead to fibrosis or scar tissue that blocks the flow of saliva. Other causes include bacterial infection, mouth breathing, heavy smoking and dehydration.

There are hundreds of medications that can cause Xerostomia. These medications include antihistamines, blood pressure medication, analgesics, tranquilizers, diuretics, and antidepressants. Common substances such as caffeine, alcohol and nicotine may also be the cause.

*(Continued on page 3)*

## Want Healthy Gums? Hit the Dairy Aisle.

**Routine intake of dairy products can help reduce periodontal disease.**

*Contributed by The American Academy of Periodontology (AAP) on the Web at [www.perio.org](http://www.perio.org)*

**M**ost people are already aware that a diet rich in dairy products can have many health-related benefits. For years we have been told that consuming dairy products can help develop strong bones and even promote weight loss. Researchers have now identified another perk of regularly including dairy products as part of a healthy diet.

A study recently published in the *Journal of Periodontology* showed that routine intake of dairy products such as milk, cheese and yogurt may lead to a reduction in periodontal, or gum, disease.

The study analyzed the periodontal health of 942 subjects ranging in age from 40 to 79. Those who regularly consumed dairy products had a lower instance of gum disease.

"Research has suggested that periodontal disease may affect overall systemic health," said study author Dr. Yoshihiro Shimazaki of Kyushu University in Fukuoka, Japan. "This study reinforces what much of the public already knows—the

importance of dairy in helping achieve a healthy lifestyle, including a healthy mouth."

Researchers observed that subjects that consumed 55 or more grams of products containing lactic acid each day had a significantly lower instance of periodontal disease.

Periodontal disease is a chronic bacterial infection that affects the gums and the bone that supports the teeth. The disease is a major cause of tooth loss in adults and has been connected to the development of heart disease and increased risk of stroke, and can contribute to complications from diabetes, respiratory disease or osteoporosis.

"Millions of adults already suffer from periodontal disease," says Dr. Susan Karabin, D.D.S., President of the American Academy of Periodontology (AAP).

The AAP is an 8,000 member association of dental professionals specializing in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of diseases affecting the gums and supporting structures of the teeth and in the placement and



maintenance of dental implants. Periodontics is one of nine dental specialties recommended by the American Dental Association.

Dr. Karabin sums up the real reasons to include dairy in your diet with this convincing argument, "By regularly consuming dairy products such as cheese and milk, something many people do each day, the risk of developing gum disease may decrease. These findings are important since maintaining healthy gums is a critical component to maintaining a healthy body." ■

## Dry Mouth

*(Continued from page 1)*

Some people seek moisture by using hard candies or mints to stimulate the flow of saliva but that can lead to dental decay.

If you are experiencing a dry feeling that persists, interfering with talking, tasting, chewing and swallowing or if you have painful areas in your mouth and feel a burning sensation, you should consult with your dentist and primary physician to determine the cause and obtain treatment.

A proper diagnosis is essential before you can receive the correct treatment for your situation. Some patients need medication for an illness. Others need a change of medications. Others need to stop smoking.

While you are experiencing symptoms, you are advised to avoid caffeine, alcohol, dry foods, salty foods, acidic foods, carbonated beverages, and smoking. You are advised to carry water for frequent sips throughout the day. If you are sucking hard candy, sugarless, non-citrus flavored candy is the best choice.

Your dentist may prescribe treatment for your dry mouth or consult with your physician for collaborative diagnosis and treatment. If you are experiencing chronic problems, your dentist may recommend oral treatments to protect your teeth. ■

# PORCELAIN CROWNS

**Strong, natural, stain-resistant**

*Contributed by Dr. Susan Hollar of Arlington, TX*



**W**hen teeth require treatment involving crowns, many patients and dentists prefer the use of the all-porcelain type rather than crowns made by placing porcelain over a metal base. All-porcelain crowns look more like natural teeth and eliminate the possibility of developing a dark line at the gumline. All-porcelain crowns can be made to match the light transmitting properties of natural teeth and will not stain or change color. They also are very strong and long lasting.

This is my patient Susan and her exceptional new smile created with all-porcelain crowns. Susan had teeth that were damaged and others that were crooked and misaligned. Susan's old crowns looked like false teeth and had discoloration at the gum line. All-porcelain crowns give her a beautiful, very natural-looking smile. She meets people with a renewed self assurance and confidence that her teeth reflect how she really feels about greeting them and how she feels about herself. ■



*"I had no idea I could have such beautiful teeth. Now I'm not self-conscious about showing a big, radiant smile," reports Dr. Hollar's patient.*

# Is this the year for you to improve your smile?

Contributed by Dr. Barry F. McArdle of Portsmouth, NH



**M**any Americans made a New Year's resolution to improve their smile. Here's a look at some ways in which this can be achieved. Depending upon your particular circumstances, the options range from conservative tooth lightening to a complete makeover with many alternatives in between.

If the color of your teeth is your primary concern, tooth lightening is an easy way to improve your smile. About eight days of at-home and in-office treatments can produce a significant improvement in the brightness of your smile. Shade variation caused by cavities or discolored fillings can often be corrected with bonding.

If substantial areas of decay, tooth fracture or defective fillings are the problem, a complete smile makeover may be the right way to go. Restorations known as "caps" or

"crowns" can transform your smile into one that is beautiful, natural looking and long lasting. (See article on page 3.)

If you are missing a tooth, a dental implant will provide a natural-looking replacement.

Misalalignment of your teeth might be a main concern. Smile design using crowns and veneers might address this but more extreme misalignments may need adult orthodontics. A "gummy" smile can also be resolved with this approach in conjunction with the expertise of certain specialists.

Not all bite discrepancies are due to misalignment. Sometimes the shape of your teeth causes them to interfere with each other when you bite and chew. This poor bite can cause unsightly wear that can be corrected with porcelain restorations such as crowns, bonding, and veneers. In addition to cosmetic improvements, your den-

tist can improve your bite by modifying the occlusal (biting) surfaces of your teeth, and this should reduce further wear and provide greater comfort.

No matter what your circumstances, there are procedures that can improve your smile. Discuss with your dentist what procedures might be appropriate for you. ■



*These severely stained and misaligned teeth were transformed with all-porcelain crowns.*



©2008 The L.D. Pankey Dental Foundation, Inc., Oral Health Report. Reproduction in whole or in part is forbidden without the publisher's written permission. The L.D. Pankey Dental Foundation, Inc., a.k.a., The Pankey Institute, is a not-for-profit corporation chartered in the State of Florida. It's mission is to improve the health and well being of the world's citizens by helping dentists achieve professional excellence through the practice of personalized, relationship-based, comprehensive dentistry.