Thank you for all your referrals. We appreciate them!

SMILE! YOU are appreciated all year through! We wish you the very best for 2013.
The ravages of gum disease, which can include bleeding gums, bad breath, and eventually lost teeth, begin with bacteria that form plaque on teeth.

Now, researchers may have discovered a key agent in plaque formation. By developing therapies that attack this agent, a molecule dubbed CTLP, researchers believe they may be able to slow the progression of gum disease and prevent tooth loss.

CTLP is the molecule that helps oral bacteria to clump together in colonies. The molecule allows new bacteria to enter the community. Once these bacteria have banded together, they can begin to destroy tissue and cause symptoms such as bleeding gums.

In its earliest stages, gum disease is called gingivitis. Gingivitis manifests itself in puffy, red gums that bleed easily. As the disease progresses, it can cause gums to pull away from the supporting bone, thus allowing teeth to loosen and ultimately fall out.

There are a number of treatments available for periodontal disease, but the best treatment is to prevent gingivitis with careful brushing after meals and flossing daily to remove particles of food trapped between teeth.

Isolating CTLP may give researchers the opportunity to target the molecule and interfere with its ability to unite bacteria. The idea would be to devise a way to inhibit CTLP from doing its job, thereby effectively dividing and conquering this threat to teeth.
Great expectations

When a woman is pregnant, she is not just eating for two; she is sleeping and breathing for two as well. How she cares for herself can make a difference in the health of her baby, and that includes good oral care.

Pregnancy gingivitis is a condition related to the rise in hormones a pregnant woman experiences. The resulting gingivitis can cause gums to become tender, red, and inflamed. The gums may bleed when the patient brushes or during a professional cleaning.

Pregnancy gingivitis is to be expected, and some patients undergo extra dental cleanings during pregnancy to counteract this problem.

Periodontal disease that strikes during pregnancy is a different issue. Studies continue to find a link between periodontal disease and preterm birth. An association between low-birth-weight babies—those weighing less than 5 pounds 8 ounces—and periodontal disease has also been made.

These findings point to the importance of good oral care both at home and in the dental office beginning as soon as a woman is aware of her pregnancy. Brushing at least twice daily combined with once-daily flossing and professional checkups based on her dentist’s recommendations could mean a healthier pregnancy and a better start in life for the new little one.

Breath gone bad

Technically, bad breath is known as “halitosis.” Had it any other name, would it smell as bad?

Bad breath isn’t like periodontal disease. It won’t cause your teeth to loosen or fall out. Bad breath will, however, wreak havoc with your relationships with loved ones, friends, and coworkers.

Bad breath can have a number of causes, but generally it is the result of food debris trapped in teeth. Other contributing factors include dry mouth, periodontal disease, use of tobacco products, and foods that linger in the bloodstream, such as garlic.

The first step in fighting breath that has gone bad is to brush well and rinse after each meal. Don’t forget to brush the tongue as well to remove bacteria nestled there.

Dry mouth can exacerbate bad breath. Stay lubricated with plenty of plain water, and use sugarless gum or lozenges to increase saliva flow, which washes away food debris. Don’t drink beverages containing alcohol or caffeine, which can contribute to xerostomia (dry mouth).

Give up tobacco products, which can affect the breath, adhere to tooth surfaces, and contribute to dry mouth.

If these suggestions don’t alleviate bad breath, another cause, such as gastrointestinal or pulmonary issues, may be at the root of the problem.

Pay a visit to our office for professional help to discover the cause of your bad breath.

Checking up on your dental health

If you are someone who prides yourself on taking exceptional care of your teeth, you certainly can give yourself a pat on the back. Don’t forget, however, that good home care is only half the equation.

Regular checkups—at least every six months—are essential to an effective oral-hygiene routine. Checkups give us a chance to rid your teeth of tartar and plaque in areas you simply can’t reach with your toothbrush and floss.

Checkups also provide an opportunity for a thorough examination. During this exam we check both hard and soft tissues, with the goal of spotting problems early, when they can be more easily remedied.

Your teeth will be checked for the first signs of decay. Restoring teeth early before decay has reached inner parts of the tooth can mean avoiding a root canal or losing a tooth.

We check your gums for periodontal disease, which may affect more than three-fourths of all Americans. Gum disease can often be successfully treated in its earliest stages. Untreated gum disease is associated with a number of health issues, including diabetes, along with tooth loss.

The soft tissues of the mouth should be checked periodically for signs of oral cancer. Oral cancer is serious business—killing as many as 5,000 yearly—so catching it early could save your life.
Here’s your dental newsletter!

I am constantly reminded of how powerful a smile can be. One smile from a family member, a friend, or even a stranger can brighten your day or change the mood of a room. But it has to be a real smile. I think you know what I mean, too. Fake smiles, the kind where your teeth don’t show, don’t cut it. A real smile can be seen in someone’s eyes.

That brings me to my next point. No one wants to be invisible. It’s a simple yet profound statement that resonated with me when I saw Oprah’s “Lifeclass” show on her network—and I realized that I can’t get it out of my head. I am not plugging her show, not by any means. But when something touches me in such a way, I feel compelled to pass it on. No one wants to be invisible. The guest speaker on the show, Toni Morrison, took it one step further: “Do your eyes light up when your child enters a room?” She said they should if you love them. Wow. That one hits home. Do I show my kids how happy I am to see them? Do your eyes light up when your spouse enters a room? Boyfriend? Girlfriend? Best friend? Parent? Sister? Brother? In other words, do the people you love see you as a grumpy, tired, overworked, annoyed person the minute they walk in the door after a long day? Who wants to come home to that? Are you happy to see them? Does your face show it? What about your coworkers, boss, or—yes, I am going there—your dog?

Before you think I am crazy, keep reading. If someone comes to my house for a visit, my dog, Darby, will continue to bother the person until they say hello, pat her on the head, and acknowledge her. She wants and needs you to see her. But don’t we all? Did you ever notice how many people walk by us every day in a hallway or in a store aisle with their eyes down, never looking up to say hello or even hold a door? Or worse, look at you and don’t acknowledge you. It’s kind of weird, in a way. I see you and you know you see me, but I am not even going to smile. A simple smile would work here. Please keep in mind that I am not talking about walking down a street in New York City, smiling like a hyena either. Maybe just toss someone next to you a smile or look at them. No one wants to be invisible.

I think this is especially important around the holidays. Let people know you care and that you are happy to see them. That doesn’t mean buying them something. But sometimes your smile, wave, or hello will be the first or only one a person will get that day. Look, we all have rough days, but it can’t hurt to toss someone a smile.

Think about it. Do the people you LOVE see your eyes light up when they wake up or come home from school or work? No one wants to be invisible.