

Word of Mouth

A Dental Newsletter

Fall 2013

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Attractive teeth are in vogue, and while whitening, veneers and Invisalign (clear braces) are good ways to beautify a smile, why is it that the simplest, most inexpensive methods take a back seat?



A few minutes dedicated towards a good daily oral hygiene routine along with regular professional dental maintenance can make a world of difference without breaking the bank!!

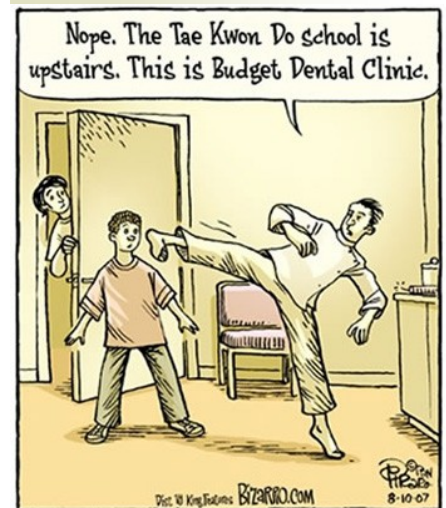
One hurdle that we face on a day-to-day basis is getting people to understand their responsibilities towards their oral health, **in between** recare visits. As dental health advocates, we never fail to send you off at the end of each appointment with a gentle reminder about brushing and flossing, or about coming back in sooner, rather than later for your next visit.

In this issue, we dare to be more aggressive and tackle the top 6 excuses we hear for not flossing. Our intent is as always, not to judge, but to help. **Our biggest reward will be when we've made a positive difference and until then, we will keep trying.**

Have a Happy Thanksgiving!

In this issue:

- ◆ **The Top Six Excuses for not Flossing**
- ◆ **Halloween Dos and Don'ts**
- ◆ **Dental Implants**
- ◆ **Root Canal Treatment Demystified**



Baby Steps towards making a difference

This Thanksgiving, Westgage Dental supports Marillac Place, a shelter for homeless young mothers and their babies, with a donation of oral care items for all its residents. It's our way of expressing thanks to the community that supports us!



Keep Your Little Monster's Teeth Away From Harm This Halloween

More than 90 percent of children will go trick or treating this year and return home with bags full of sugary candy that can turn anyone's mouth into a playground for cavity causing bacteria. By taking a few preventive steps, however, your children can enjoy Halloween without harming their teeth.

Since **sugar-free gum** is one treat that actually helps prevent cavities, it is a smart choice to drop in Halloween bags this year. Parents can also give it to their children to help neutralize the effects of sugary snacks after eating. Chewing sugar-free gum containing the artificial sweeteners sorbitol and xylitol reduces cavities. The chewing motion stimulates the flow of saliva, which helps cleanse the teeth.

Sweets are especially harmful, since damaging acids form in the mouth

every time you eat a sugary snack and continue to affect the teeth for at least 20 minutes before they are neutralized. The sweetening agents in sugarless gum are effective in combating the bacteria in plaque and fighting the acid that eats away at enamel.

Worst:

Chewy, sticky sweets such as gum-mies, toffee and even raisins get stuck in the crevices of teeth and are a serious source of tooth decay.

Sour candies are highly acidic and can erode tooth enamel. However, saliva slowly neutralizes the acids and adds minerals to lost tooth structure. This is why it is best to wait for 30 min before you brush your teeth after consuming sweets.

Sugary snacks like candy corn, cookies and cake contain high amounts of sugar.

Refined foods like chips stick to tooth surfaces.

Best:

Sugar free lollipops and hard candies stimulate saliva which neutralizes acids and prevents a build up of plaque which causes cavities.

Sugar free gum

Dark chocolate has cancer fighting antioxidants and according to some studies is good for the heart and may even lower blood pressure.



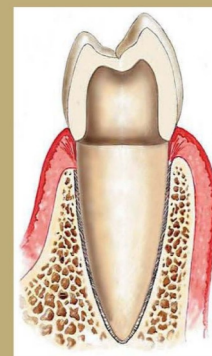
Dental Implants: The closest replacement to natural teeth

The success of dental implants has revolutionized dentistry. The ability to permanently replace missing teeth with a function and appearance close to that of the natural teeth has never been greater. With more than 3 decades of scientific evidence to support the clinical use of dental implants, it is possible to confidently resolve that implants are predictable and provide patients with long-term functional and esthetic tooth replacement.

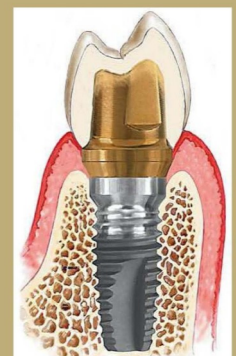
This is a remarkable accomplishment, considering the many challenges and stresses that the oral environment and chewing forces present for dental implants.

So if you have had that missing or loose tooth/teeth and shudder at the thought of dentures, dental implants are a great option. And what's more, you can have your implant placed right here at Westgage Dental! Please call us at (519)576-7262 for any questions or to book a free consultation to see if you are a suitable candidate.

Comparison of natural tooth and single tooth implant replacement



Natural tooth with a crown



Implant with (post) abutment and crown

What Is a Root Canal?

Underneath your tooth's outer enamel and within the dentin is an area of soft tissue called the pulp tissue. While a tooth's pulp tissue does contain nerve fibers, it is also composed of arteries, veins, lymph vessels, and connective tissue. Each tooth's nerve enters the tooth at the very tip of its roots. From there, the nerve runs through the center of the root in small "root canals," which join up with the tooth's pulp chamber. Root canals are very small, thin divisions that branch off from the top pulp chamber down to the tip of the root. A tooth has at least one but rarely more than four root canals.

Why do I feel pain?

When the pulp becomes infected due to a deep cavity or fracture that allows bacteria to seep in, or injury due to trauma, it can get infected and eventually die. Damaged or dead pulp causes increased blood flow and cellular activity, and pressure cannot be relieved from inside the tooth. Pain in the tooth is commonly felt when biting down, chewing on it and applying hot or cold foods and drinks.

Why do I need root canal therapy?

Root canal therapy is necessary because the tooth will not heal by itself. Without treatment, the infection will spread, bone around the tooth will begin to degenerate and the tooth may fall out. Pain usually worsens until one is forced to seek emergency dental attention. The only alternative is usually extraction of the tooth, which can cause surrounding teeth to shift crookedly, resulting in a bad bite. Though an extraction is cheaper, the space left behind will require an implant or a bridge, which can be more expensive than root canal therapy. If you have the choice, it's always best to keep your original teeth.

What is a root canal procedure?

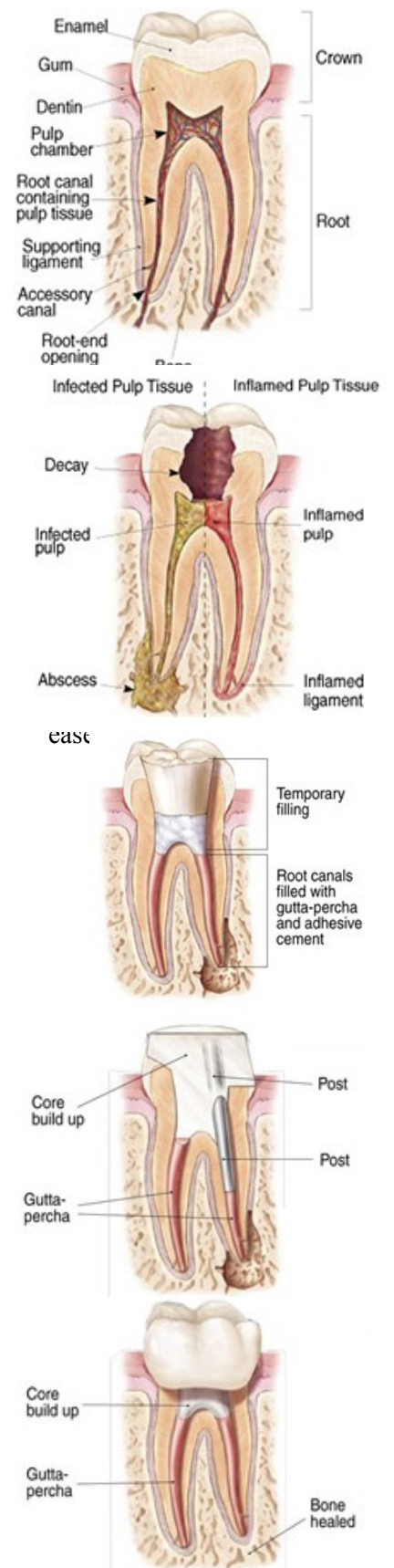
A root canal is a procedure done to save the damaged or dead pulp in the root canal of the tooth by cleaning out the diseased pulp and reshaping the canal. The canal is filled with a rubberlike substance called gutta-percha or another material to prevent recontamination of the tooth. The tooth is then permanently sealed, with possibly a post and/or a crown made of porcelain or metal alloy. This enables patients to keep the original tooth.

What are the risks and complications?

More than 95 percent of root canal treatments are successful. However, sometimes a procedure needs to be redone due to diseased canal offshoots that went unnoticed or the fracture of a filing instrument, both of which rarely occur. Occasionally, a root canal therapy will fail altogether, marked by a return of pain.

Is there pain associated with getting a root canal?

Most of the time, people will say that a root canal doesn't hurt any more than getting a simple filling, and they should be able to return to their normal activities immediately. Since a person needing a root canal is often already in extreme pain, the root canal treatment actually provides relief from pain and recovery is very minimal. Usually, relief can be obtained with the help of over-the-counter pain medications.



WHAT'S YOUR EXCUSE ?

Excuse #1 I only floss when food is stuck between teeth. Flossing isn't just about getting that popcorn kernel unstuck, it is about removing dental plaque, the bacteria that forms colonies on your teeth in between cleanings. Plaque causes bad breath, gum disease, tooth decay and eventual tooth loss. It forms within minutes of eating or drinking and is invisible.

Excuse #2 I'm not coordinated enough to floss. While using a nice long strand of dental floss is best, for people who use this excuse floss picks are just the thing. Floss picks are sold at dollar stores, drug stores and supermarkets and consist of a little piece of floss on a handy plastic handle. They are also useful if you lack manual dexterity due to arthritis. Keep a pack handy so you can floss even during your workday!

Excuse#5 My teeth are too close together. Teeth are arranged to have flexible contacts between them to allow for minor movements that occur during function, like when chewing. Although some contacts may be tighter than others, most allow floss to pass through easily. All it takes is a little skill and loads of patience. We will be happy to help if you ask!

Excuse #3 My gums bleed when I floss. If flossing causes pain or bleeding, you probably already have gum disease — which is why you need to floss more than ever before. When you are brushing and flossing on a regular basis the gum pain and bleeding should stop within a few days. If they don't then it may be time to book an appointment for a professional cleaning.

Excuse #4 The floss shreds in my mouth. You probably have old dental work that is failing and needs to be replaced. Mention the areas where you are having problems with floss on your next visit. You may just need a simple fix to end the shreds. Even if you have braces or bridgework you can still floss using floss threaders.

Excuse #6 I Don't Have Time to Floss. Think about all the different grooming activities done in front of the bathroom mirror every day – make up application, styling hair and brushing teeth as a few options – and this excuse doesn't seem to hold much water. The simple fact is that if you have time to sit and watch TV or read or text, then you have time to floss. Invest in several bags of floss picks or containers of dental floss and put them in strategic places, such as:

- your nightstand
- a pocket or purse
- in the car (try the cup holder)
- on the bathroom counter
- by your favorite spot on the couch
- in the kitchen window

and wherever else you might see this floss often. Having the dental floss within easy reach is a simple way to remind and motivate you to floss regularly!

The end of the year is fast approaching, which means for most people, dental benefits will expire on Dec. 31st. Call us today to schedule your appointment for outstanding treatment and take advantage of your benefits. We would like to remind you that putting off dental treatment only makes treatment complicated and more expensive.