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# 888-SMILE UPDATE

## TEAM UPDATE

I'm very excited to introduce you, our valued patients, to our incredibly caring team. The extensive positive feedback from many of you goes to show that less sometimes really is more. We have gone from five to three full time team members with our main focus in customer service. Our team is very tight and we have daily meetings discussing how we can best serve our individual patients like yourself. For instance we have added a second hygienist in order to offer more convenient times for you to get in for your hygiene appointments.

### Our superb team consists of:

**Adriana** is an exceptional person and the leader of our team. From answering the telephones to checking out our valued patients, and everything in between, Adriana amazes me how she maintains her charisma and caring nature throughout the day. Her premium customer service background in dentistry is hard to match. We are lucky to have her.

**Nita** is our lead dental assistant and just an amazing person. She is one of those people who is hard not to love. Her positive energy and quirky sense of humor keeps everyone smiling.

**Tammy** is a veteran in the healthcare arena. She has a background in physical therapy and a great knack for how to keep your whole body healthy through proper dental health. As the lead dental hygienist, Tammy is a real asset to our dental hygiene program. She is also a huge U of A fan.

**Mary** is the newest member of our team. She will be helping us out part-time on Mondays in our hygiene department. Mary is a very efficient and caring hygienist. I'm sure she will make your hygiene visit a real pleasure. Welcome to our team!

WE WISH ALL OUR PATIENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES A HAPPY, HEALTHY, & SAFE HOLIDAY SEASON!



We appreciate all of you as patients. The best compliment you can give us is letting your friends know about us.

Don't forget to leave a message for Dr. Wexler on the office answering machine if you need him on weekends or holidays. He checks his messages 3-4 times a day during those times.

## DID YOU MAXIMIZE YOUR INSURANCE BENEFITS IN 2007?

I want to thank all of our patients for another great year. Along with the year coming to an end and the holiday season quickly approaching, most of you with dental insurance will want to maximize your 2007 benefits by the end of December. Some of you have dental insurance benefit year ends in other months, like October. Check with your human resource department at work to verify when your dental insurance benefit year ends, or give our office a call to find out.

Did you know that each year insurance companies make millions of dollars off patients who forego necessary and preventive dental care? Many individuals who are paying for dental insurance do not realize that their plans provide coverage up to a certain dollar amount annually. Consequently some patients are not scheduling the dental treatment they need, deserve and have insurance to cover. Thus, the insurance revenues allocated to pay dental claims on many patients are never used and unfortunately, those dollars cannot be carried over year to year. The bottom line...what the patients do not use they lose.

Clearly, it pays in many ways to schedule the preventive care or other dental treatment that you need. We are here to help you secure the insurance coverage available to you on every dental procedure you schedule. Call our office now to find out how much you have in unused dental benefits, and together let's make sure you are in excellent dental health. We look forward to seeing you again and sharing some of the many innovative means we now have available to provide you with superior dental health care.

**Dr. Wexler** earned his Bachelor of Arts in biology from the University of Colorado, Boulder. He returned to his hometown of Chicago, Illinois to attend the University of Illinois at Chicago Dental School earning a Bachelor of Science in Dentistry in 1996, and his Doctorate of Dental Surgery in 1998. While there, he was awarded the *Best-Of-the-Best Award for Excellence in Prosthodontics*.

Dr. Wexler enrolled in an Advanced Education of General Dentistry residency at El Rio Health Center in Tucson. He and his wife, Allison loved the Tucson area so much that they decided to stay.

Dr. Wexler opened his dental practice, as their family grew.... They have two beautiful daughters, Lily (6 1/2), and Bella (4 1/2) as well as their beloved adopted pets; Frisco & Reggie their dogs, and Violet their cat.



## WHAT IS PERIODONTAL DISEASE, I JUST WANTED A CLEANING!

80 % of the population has some form of periodontal disease (gum disease). Gum disease has two major forms: gingivitis & the more severe periodontitis. Periodontitis is a very serious dental disease and the major cause for tooth loss and loose teeth.

Gingivitis involves bleeding gums while brushing/flossing, mouth sores, bright red or red-purple or shiny gums, or gums tender to the touch. This is a reversible disease caused by specific bacteria.



Nearly 1 in 3 adults have some form of periodontitis. Periodontitis is not reversible and involves the same signs and symptoms as gingivitis, discussed above, along with the loss of bone support and oftentimes gingival support (receding gums). The main cause for periodontitis is plaque (sticky film that forms continuously on your teeth) which turns into calculus or tartar (a hard substance which only a dentist or hygienist can remove) within 2-3 days. The bacteria in plaque produces toxins which cause redness and irritation which destroy one's gum and bony tissues around the teeth. When this occurs, the gum tissue peels away from the teeth and causes pockets to form which harbor more bacteria and plaque and tartar,

and therefore, increase the seriousness of the disease. The probing measurements done during your hygiene visits check for these pockets.

Various factors can increase your risk of periodontal disease and are not limited to: smoking, systemic diseases (diabetes, autoimmune diseases, etc.), hormonal changes, poor nutrition, stress, genetics, medications, amongst others.

Patients with periodontal disease are at higher risks to various others diseases and health problems including stroke, low birth weight babies, cardiovascular diseases, preeclampsia, preterm labor, respiratory diseases, and others still unknown.

Periodontal disease diagnosis is often a surprise to patients since pain association is rare until the disease has progressed to a more severe state or exacerbates locally from trauma or a tooth problem.

Periodontal disease is normally a chronic disease process, which much like cancer, goes in and out of remission. The initial treatment regimen involves a procedure called scaling and root planing where plaque, tartar, and bacterial toxins are removed from the root surfaces below the gum line of your teeth, unlike the usual dental prophylaxis ("prophy") or cleaning which most of us are used to getting every six months where the healthy dentition are cleaned above the gum line. In order to keep the disease in remission (stabilized), it is required to see patients more than twice a year for a different procedure called periodontal maintenance. Unfortunately, this procedure is not always covered by your dental insurance, so their may be an extra out of pocket expense.



Please help us serve our patients better by giving us at least 48 hours notice for any changes with your appointment times. This not only will avoid a \$50 cancellation fee, but will allow us time to fill our busy schedule with patients waiting to get an appointment. Thank-you, your cooperation is much appreciated!



Are you unhappy with your smile, or even embarrassed? Have family members made you uncomfortable about how your teeth look? Call our office at 888-SMILE for a free cosmetic consult. We will customize a treatment plan for you by utilizing our "Smile Book" and spending time discussing your dream smile. Let us put a smile on your face with the latest advances in dentistry.

**Fee Schedule Change:** We have been able to avoid any changes in our fees for 2 years, but due to inflationary pressure, it is necessary to evaluate and re-adjust our fees for the coming year. It is in your best interest to get your pending treatment done by the end of the year. Please note, we will honor any signed treatment plans for 6 months from their signed date.

**Fluoride** helps strengthen our teeth, but should be used with caution. Start using a pea sized amount of fluoride toothpaste at 2 1/2 years old. Make sure your child spits it out to avoid a higher risk of fluorosis, or discoloration of the future permanent teeth. Fluoride is found in many foods we eat and daily supplements are not usually needed. A fluoride varnish at least every 6 months has been shown to decrease the cavity rate in children and adults exponentially. The fluoride varnish stays on the teeth longer than the oral rinses. Ask Tammy or Dr. Wexler for more details.

### Did you know.....

- The amount of radiation exposure in a full series of regular dental x-rays (18 films) is equivalent to less than 3 weeks of everyday exposure to our environment? The amount of radiation with digital x-rays can be as much as 1/5th the amount of radiation as regular x-rays. We have been using, DEXIS, the best digital x-ray unit available since January 2006. This unit not only allows us to minimize radiation exposure to our patients, but it also allows us to see more of what is occurring within your teeth and bone tissue. It makes diseases such as cavities, cancers, cysts, periodontitis, etc. much easier to diagnose.
- Dental insurance is not really insurance at all. It is actually a money benefit typically provided by an employer to help their employees pay for routine dental treatment. The employer buys a plan based on the amount of the benefit and how much the premium costs per month. Most dental benefits are designed to cover only a portion of the total cost. If you are unhappy with your dental benefits, it is best to talk to your human resource department or employer to possibly change plans. You can call Adriana to find out what some of the better dental insurance plans there are.
- **LASER Technology used to Diagnose Cavities?** Many of you have heard Dr. Wexler and Tammy talk about whether we should take out the laser for the doctors portion of the exam. The LASER we are talking about is called the Diagnodent. This LASER diagnoses the depth of cavities in tooth structure and deciphers cavities from stains caused from foods we eat or habits we have such as smoking or chewing tobacco, which stains our teeth similar to the stains caused from cavities. Dr. Wexler had participated in research with the Diagnodent in the past and has found it to be over 98% effective in diagnosing when to treat a cavity and when to monitor one. The Diagnodent is very beneficial to the patient by allowing us to treat a cavity when it is small, instead of when it causes a patient discomfort or pain. The majority of the time when a patient has pain due to cavities, the tooth will require more than a simple filling, and oftentimes, it will require a larger procedure such as a root canal and/or a crown which is much more involved and costly to the patient. When having cavities treated after being diagnosed with the Diagnodent, a local anesthetic ("shot") oftentimes is not necessary. Dr. Wexler may give you the option based on your preference.
- **Note,** Dr. Wexler continues to take courses and investigates new technologies to better serve our patients. Lasers utilized to treat cavities and to use for various gum treatments in order to make our patients visits more comforting are his most recent interest.

