

Hawkeye Family Dental

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June 2013– Volume 4 Issue 2

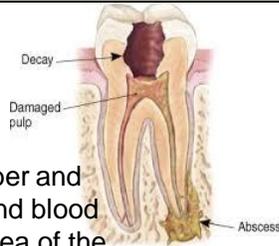
Filled In

You may need root canal therapy and not even realize it!

Inside every tooth is a chamber and canal that house the nerve and blood vessels for the tooth. This area of the tooth is called the pulp. The blood vessels bring nutrients to the tooth and remove bacteria and debris from the tooth. The nerves provide cold sensation. There are several reasons that the pulp can become irritated to the point that this communication with the rest of the body is severed and the tooth no longer responds appropriately. When this happens, nutrients are no longer being transported to the tooth and bacteria and debris are not being removed. When the blood vessels have been severed and the nerve has died, the necrotic debris must be removed from the tooth to prevent infection and pain. The process of cleaning the severed blood vessels and nerves out of the inside of the chamber and canal is called root canal therapy. Root canal therapy is necessary any time the pulp tissue has been damaged. There are several reasons that this damage can occur, some of these include:

- a deep cavity, a broken tooth, trauma, too rapid of movement with braces, a crack, extensive wear or erosion, root resorption

When the pulp dies, sometimes there are symptoms; such as hot or cold sensitivity, pain to chewing, or swelling, but other times there are no symptoms at all. We monitor the health of your teeth and gums at your cleaning visits. The best way to evaluate the need for root canal therapy is through x-rays and clinical evaluation at these visits. If symptoms arise between recall visits, please call the office. We can help determine if you need root canal therapy or if the sensitivity will resolve without further treatment.



Ask Kari

What is plaque?

Plaque is a white, sticky matrix that forms on the teeth. It consists of food debris, acid, and bacteria. The bacteria in plaque are directly linked to tooth decay and gum tissue infections (gingivitis and periodontitis). Plaque forms on the teeth throughout the day. Brushing twice a day and flossing once a day helps to minimize residual plaque and plaque build-up. If plaque is not removed within 48 hours, it starts to harden. After 10 days the plaque becomes so hard that it can no longer be removed. When this happens, the hardened plaque is referred to as calculus (or tartar). Calculus deposits cannot be removed at home and must be removed with specialized instruments at your professional cleaning. Calculus is rough and porous. These two properties make it difficult to effectively clean the tooth and allow the plaque to more easily attach to the tooth surface, perpetuating the cycle of plaque deposition and transition into calculus.



As Seen on TV

Xylitol



Did you know that there is a sugar that dentists love? Xylitol, a naturally and synthetically made sugar, has been labeled “the good for you sugar” by dentists because of its numerous benefits for the oral environment. When chewed regularly, xylitol interferes with bacteria metabolism. With the metabolism altered, bacteria are not able to produce the sticky matrix that helps them bind to the tooth structure. This limits plaque build-up. With lower levels of acid producing bacteria present in the mouth, there is less acid present. Less acid results in less tooth structure degradation. Xylitol further improves the remineralization process by reducing the acid levels and balancing the pH of the oral environment. Xylitol also interferes with the growth of acid producing bacteria, dramatically decreasing the number present in the oral environment. Other benefits of xylitol include but are not limited to; an increase in saliva production, alleviating the symptoms of dry mouth, a reduction in gum tissue inflammation, and it has fewer calories than sugar. Xylitol can be found in food as well as chewing gums such as: *Orbit*, *Spry* and *Trident*. Make sure xylitol is listed early on the list of ingredients to insure you are getting the maximum benefit of the xylitol.



Money Matters



Insurance Payment Denials



Last time we discussed several common reasons for insurance to deny coverage of dental services. Here are a few more of the most common denial reasons:

Annual Maximum Benefits – Almost every dental insurance plan has an annual maximum benefit amount. This dollar amount is the most that your insurance will pay in a year period for dental services that you receive. If you are getting caught up on needed dental work and have a large treatment plan or have a year in which you need more extensive restorative work done, you may reach and go over your annual maximum. Any services completed once the maximum is reached will be denied payment.

Waiting Periods – It is common for dental plans to restrict the services they will pay for until a specific waiting period has been fulfilled. The waiting period is usually measured from the effective date of the policy holder’s coverage. If a restricted service is completed prior to the end of the waiting period, the insurance plan will not cover it.

Missing Tooth Clauses – Depending on the plan, benefits may not be available for teeth lost prior to the effective date of coverage with that plan. If your insurance plan has a missing tooth clause and an area with teeth lost before you enrolled in the plan is restored, no payment will be made.



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Happy Anniversary to. . . . Us!

This summer will mark Hawkeye Family Dental's 5th anniversary. Dr. Zwart and her staff would like to thank all of you for being such great patients and for helping to make this office such a great place to work. We look forward to the next 5 years.

Kids Corner

Brace yourself, you or your children may need teeth aligned or straightened in order to properly bite, chew, speak, and maintain good oral hygiene. Dental braces are an appliance that moves your teeth into their proper placement. Whether you are thinking about getting braces or have them already, it is important to know how to care for them. Braces require you to put in additional time and effort to be effective at keeping your teeth and gums clean and healthy. The following tips will help keep your smile looking great during the braces, so you can have a beautiful, healthy smile when the braces are removed.



-Brush all sides of the teeth and the brackets. Make sure to brush the tops and insides of the teeth as normal. When brushing the cheek side of the tooth, you need to make sure to brush the top of the bracket, the front of the bracket and below the bracket.

-Brush after every meal. Food and debris can stick to the brackets. Brushing after every meal helps to remove the food and bacteria on the teeth and near the gum tissue

-Use floss threaders or super floss to clean between the teeth. The wire that connects the brackets and straightens the teeth makes it impossible to floss normally. You must "thread" the floss under the wire and between the brackets to clean between the teeth with the floss. If you are unsure of how to do this, please ask us at your next cleaning appointment. This is a very important step in keeping the teeth and gum tissue healthy.

-Keep up on your regular cleaning appointments. Keeping your teeth healthy while in braces is extremely important for a great result after braces. Regular cleaning visits (often every 3 months while in braces) are a great way to keep your mouth healthy. We are able to remove the calculus and debris that you were not able to remove at home and we monitor the health of your teeth and gums. Your orthodontist evaluates the position of your teeth, but is not focused on the health of the teeth and gums. With regular cleaning appointments, we can identify problems early, thereby minimizing the need for treatment.

-Use an electric toothbrush. An electric toothbrush is a great instrument in keeping the teeth and gum tissue healthy. With the high powered vibration, it is much more effective at removing plaque and food debris than a manual toothbrush.

-Use a high fluoride toothpaste and in-office fluoride treatments. One of the common results of poor hygiene with braces is "white spots" around the brackets and bands, these are pre-cavities. Using a high fluoride toothpaste allows fluoride to incorporate into these weak spots and helps to harden the tooth structure.