



Smiles by

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*Welcome to an extraordinary experience in dental care.*

May 28, 2009

Welcome !

In this issue:



### Two degrees of gum disease

Gum disease is classified according to the extent of bone loss and the severity of the condition. There are two stages of gum disease: gingivitis and periodontitis.

Gingivitis is tissue inflammation and is reversible through regular dental cleanings, flossing and brushing. However, if gingivitis is not addressed early enough, it can turn into periodontitis, which must be treated professionally and may require surgery to fully correct.

Regardless of the stage of gum disease, the overall goal is to treat and control any infection that exists with proper at-home care that includes brushing, flossing and healthy eating; as well as non-surgical procedures such as scaling which removes plaque, bacteria and tartar, and root planning which smoothes out parts of the teeth where germs and bacteria tend to collect.

### Dental Treatments for Sleep Apnea

It is estimated that millions of Americans suffer from sleep apnea, but far fewer know very much about what it is or how it can be treated. Quite simply sleep apnea is the disruption of normal breathing during sleep and can become a very serious problem if left untreated. Sleep apnea can be difficult to diagnose since no one remembers how his or her breathing was the night before.

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People suffering from sleep apnea also may choke or gasp during sleep to draw in breath, experience loud snoring, awake suddenly to restart breathing, sweat frequently through the night, experience headaches, sore throat, or dry mouth in the morning, and even may experience daytime sleepiness.

### Causes

Causes of sleep apnea vary. Large tonsils, obesity, relaxation of the tongue and throat muscles, smoking, nasal congestion, and heredity are some of the major causes. Sleep apnea can also develop from other physical ailments such as weak immune system, severe heartburn, acid reflux or high blood pressure.

### Treatment

While not usually associated with sleep apnea, dentists can actually play a large and successful role in the treatment of sleep apnea. Dentists, working along with other health professionals, can control the symptoms or reverse sleep apnea. In fact, dental treatments are some of the most common and affordable ones. There are different dental appliances, lower jaw adjustment devices, and oral devices that can help treat and fight mild to moderate sleep apnea.

Many dental devices for treating sleep apnea can be similar to athletic mouth guards or appliances used for orthodontics and are made of acrylic, fitting inside the mouth so that when fitted properly can reposition jaw bones and facial muscles. Others actually fit around the head and chin to reposition the jaw, much like headgear for braces. Two of most common dental treatments for sleep apnea include the Tongue Retaining Device and the Mandibular Repositioning. These two devices help open your airway while you sleep. It moves your lower jaw or tongue forward. Often, the lower jaw and tongue move too far back, blocking the flow of air during sleep.

Dental treatments and devices for sleep apnea can make a huge difference in treating mild to moderate cases. We are proud that Dr. Firouzian has also been able to help patients who suffer with this condition and have also seen improvement with this alternative to CPAP. We believe strongly in the need for further knowledge about this condition that compromises a patient's long term life and can even cause dental complications for them. Rest assured that as our patient, we screen everyone and will alert you to any concerns we may find at your routine dental appointment every 6 months. Dr. Mike's team diligently screens all of the wonderful children in our practice for sleep concerns as well. These are the easiest to treat and can allow a healthier future without development of sleep problems.

Please feel free to forward this email to friends and family who could benefit from our help or this information. Patients who benefit from treatment can only live a healthier life after treatment. We cannot get back the years lost due to an unhealthy quality of rest and sleep, just change the future. ***Incidentally, growth and attention problems are closely related to sleep issues in children since apnea in children can prevent them from reaching REM sleep stage. So if children have a hard time going to sleep or staying asleep, there may be an underlying problem.***

We greatly appreciate your vote of confidence by your consistent referrals of friends and family members. We want you, our valued friends and patients, to know that we will never falter in our efforts to maintain the highest quality of care, time and attention, even as our practice continues to grow. We pay close attention to our patient surveys, it is critical to being in touch with each of you and we want your input! So please keep the referrals coming and know we greatly appreciate them.

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