

make time for yourself

Finally the holiday season is over, and now is the ideal time to catch up on all those tasks that need to be done. It's a good time to clean up the house and throw away all the clutter. One item that should be replaced, but is often forgotten is your toothbrush. The mouth is home to hundreds of different types of micro-organisms which, surprisingly, can be transferred to your toothbrush. Especially after a cold, it is important to change your toothbrush as the germs could still be lingering in and on the bristles. It is generally recommended to replace your toothbrush every 3 months.

Your dental health could have been neglected during the busy festive season so now is the time to get back into shape. Neglecting to brush and floss daily or delaying your regular check-up could have long term effects on the health of your teeth and gums. Call to schedule an appointment, or if you prefer make a request through our website at: www.smilefocus.com.sg. Log on to the site and click on the "make appointment" icon. A page will pop up - just fill in a few details and submit it. One of our dental team will contact you with a reply.

Visiting your dentist regularly will help maintain a healthy mouth and identify problems early.

wisdom teeth - to keep or not to keep

What are wisdom teeth?

Wisdom teeth are the third molars - those that are the furthest back in the mouth. Molars are important for chewing our food but wisdom teeth through evolution no longer have any specific use. Usually a person has 4 but sometimes not all of them will develop. Generally they emerge between 17 and 21 years of age when we reach adulthood, which is why they are called 'wisdom' teeth. They can, however, be seen on an x-ray as early as 14 years old.

Why do wisdom teeth cause problems?

Often the mouth is not large enough to accommodate wisdom teeth and they can become impacted. They may grow sideways, emerge only part way out of the gum, or remain trapped beneath the gum and bone. Any of these outcomes can cause problems. The gum around a wisdom tooth can become infected, leading to severe pain, swelling, jaw stiffness or even general illness. The impacted tooth itself, even if it is not visible, can become decayed. It may also cause decay and periodontal (bone and gum) disease in the adjacent healthy tooth. After examining your mouth and taking X-rays, your dentist will advise whether or not your wisdom teeth should be removed.

Why remove wisdom teeth?

As they are located so far back in the mouth, wisdom teeth are often very difficult to keep clean, leading to problems that otherwise would not occur in teeth which are further forward. Although your wisdom teeth may seem fine, the dentist may advise on extraction to prevent potential problems that are more obvious to a professional. The younger you are (under 30) the easier it is to have them removed as the bone is more elastic. Also, problems tend to become worse as you get older and it is more likely you will need to be treated for pain and infection before having them removed. To avert problems, it is best not to wait until your wisdom teeth cause trouble before seeking help.

Your dentist will assess each wisdom tooth independently as to the advantages and disadvantages of its removal. All partially erupted teeth are at risk from infection and the level of risk will depend on the degree of impaction. If you have any doubts about the procedure, please raise these with your dentist. The decision to have your wisdom teeth removed is always yours and you should feel comfortable making the decision knowing you have been well informed beforehand.



smiletalk



Dr Sian Jenkin

B.D.S. (London) L.D.S.R.C.S. (England) F.D.S.R.C.S. (England) Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of England

Dr Jenkin graduated from London University and worked 10 years in hospitals within the U.K. covering various specialities. She is a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of England and is particularly experienced in oral surgery (wisdom teeth), periodontics (gum care) and teeth whitening.



cambodia volunteer program

During January a team of our dentists travelled to Siem Reap, Cambodia as part of our on-going volunteer program in conjunction with the Angkor Hospital for Children (AHC). Dr Marcus Cooney, Dr Sian Jenkin and Dr Hal Kussick offered their time to treat some of the many orphans and street kids in desperate need of dental care. The hospital has a well structured volunteer program where patients are screened for necessary dental treatment. Dentists from all over the world help by volunteering their time to treat those in need.

There is also an out reach program where the dentists visit rural villages to attend to both children and adult patients. Often these people do not have the means to travel into the hospital in Siem Reap. On an appointed day the patients line up for their turn in the mobile folding chair where the dentist attends to their problem in very basic conditions with no electricity or water.

Marcus, Sian and Hal found the experience to be highly valuable and felt great satisfaction in being able to assist the Cambodian people in this small way. There will be more times scheduled throughout the year where our associate dentists will be providing their time and care as part of this volunteer program. Together with the generosity of our dental suppliers, we plan to donate materials and equipment to improve the facilities within the hospital's own dental clinic.



did you know?

Did you know the first toothbrushes were African chewing sticks? These sticks were actually tree twigs which the natives flattened and then chewed on. This action mechanically cleaned teeth while natural oils from the twigs chemically attacked cavity causing bacteria. The Chinese invented the first modern toothbrushes, composed of hog hair or horse mane bristles embedded into ivory handles.

announcements



Welcome to Susanne Ronsdorf, who recently joined our team at reception. Susanne is German and has worked as a medical nurse for many years before relocating to Singapore. She speaks fluent English, French, German and Spanish for those patients who prefer to converse in these languages.

With regret we say goodbye to Ngaire Corry who will be returning to Australia with her family. We thank Ngaire for her dedication to the clinic and take this opportunity to wish her the very best in the future.