

Dr. Douglas B. Phillips

Complete Care For  
Confident Smiles

Douglas B. Phillips, DDS, PA

(828) 254-1944

100 Executive Park  
Asheville, NC 28801

www.DentistryByPhillips.com

## New Protocols For Premedications



It's not just your smile we want healthy and bright! Through our care, we also desire to

enhance your overall well-being. This is why it's important to keep us informed of your health status at each appointment as well as any medications you are taking.

For patients with heart conditions, the American Heart Association previously advised pre-medication prior to dental care as a preventive for infective endocarditis (IE). New guidelines no longer advise these antibiotics prior to treatment.

Recent scientific evidence shows that the risks of taking preventive antibiotics outweigh the benefits for most, citing how inappropriate use can lead to developing drug-resistant bacteria.

Additionally, no compelling evidence exists that taking antibiotics before dental procedures helps to prevent infective endocarditis in patients at risk of developing a heart infection. It was noted that activities such as daily brushing and flossing regularly expose the bloodstream, and thus the heart, to bacteria from the mouth. Because the bacteria released into the bloodstream as a result of dental care is low, studies revealed the potential for infection through these procedures didn't pose enough of a risk factor to warrant pre-medication as a routine.

Those who have taken antibiotics in the past and

no longer routinely need them prior to dental procedures include people with mitral valve prolapse, rheumatic heart disease, bicuspid valve disease, calcified aortic stenosis, or those whose heart conditions were present at birth (such as ventricular septal defect).

**However, it must be noted that preventive antibiotics are still advised for those with:**

- ❖ artificial heart valves
- ❖ a history of infective endocarditis
- ❖ serious congenital heart conditions
- ❖ cardiac transplant with a heart valve problem

For patients no longer required to take preventive medication prior to dental treatment, the American Heart Association strongly advises maintaining optimal oral health and hygiene. Reducing bacteria in the mouth gives more important benefits than antibiotics taken prior to dental procedures to reduce IE risk.

This is an important message for all our patients. Think of your oral home care regimen as a significant measure to improve your overall health. Your cleanings and exams here help us ensure you're on the right track and allow us to catch problems at their earliest stages. Be proud of your commitment to your oral health and know that the benefits extend far beyond your mouth!



## Research Links Gum Disease To Pancreatic Cancer

Pancreatic cancer, the fourth leading cause of cancerous deaths in the U.S., is an extremely difficult cancer to treat with little known about its cause. In a study supported by grants from the National Cancer Institute, researchers at the Harvard School of Public Health and Dana-Farber Cancer Institute found that periodontal disease was associated with an increased risk of pancreatic cancer.

Periodontal disease is caused by bacterial infection and inflammation of the gums that causes loss of bone that supports the teeth. Previous studies found a link between tooth loss or periodontitis and pancreatic cancer, but no firm conclusions could be drawn. One consisted of all smokers and the other did not control for smoking in the analysis.

Data for this new study began in 1986 with 51,529 American participants working in health professions. Each responded to questionnaires about their health every two years. After analyzing the data, researchers confirmed 216 cases of pancreatic cancer between 1986 and 2002; of those, 67 reported periodontal disease.

The results showed that those with periodontal disease had a 63% higher risk of developing pancreatic cancer compared to those reporting no gum disease. Remarkably, "never-smokers" had a two-fold increase in risk of pancreatic cancer.

One possible explanation for the results is that inflammation from periodontal disease may promote cancer of the pancreas. Because adults with periodontal disease have elevated systemic inflammation, this may somehow contribute to the promotion of cancer cells.

Another theory is that gum

Continued ...

### When This Happens, You Should...

Your mouth can occasionally have symptoms that are sending signals to you to take action. Here are some common problems and what you can do to have a healthier mouth:

• **BAD BREATH: Overload of bacteria in the mouth.**

Bacteria that break down food in your mouth excrete odor-producing materials. If not thoroughly washed away, the buildup creates breath odor.

**What to do?** Naturally, brush twice daily, floss, and use a tongue scraper to clear hard to reach bacteria. Chew sugarless gum after meals to aid saliva flow to wash away germs. When bad breath persists, the odor may be from gum infection as bacteria create the smell of infected tissue. In addition to your periodontal (gum) exam at regular care visits, use of antibacterial rinses can help in conjunction with periodontal treatment.

• **CANKER SORES: Painful mouth sores that occur typically during times of fatigue or stress.**

Great, just when your immune system is already stretched thin from stress or too much to do, you get a canker sore. Ouch!

**What to do?** Over-the-counter medications can numb the pain, but swishing with warm, salty water will help as well. Generally, canker sores only last 10-14 days, so realizing its presence is signaling your life needs a slow-down and try some deep breathing. A quick treatment with our Diode Laser can be also done in under 10 minutes to reduce or eliminate the pain from these bothersome ulcers.

• **VERY SENSITIVE TEETH: Possibly brushing too hard or using a hard bristle toothbrush.**

While you want to brush your teeth thoroughly, overdoing it can do more damage than good. A heavy hand or hard bristles can damage enamel and gum tissue. When the tissues surrounding teeth at the gum line are damaged, the tooth roots are no longer protected from heat and cold.

**What to do?** Damage to enamel and gum tissue won't heal. Resolve to use a light hand and toothpaste for sensitive teeth. Some damage may need repair through gum therapy and tooth restorations.

## Ways To Prevent Tooth **EROSION**

**F**ruit, yogurt, and colas, may seem like harmless snacks and drinks, but improper consumption may lead to devastating and permanent damage to teeth. Tooth erosion, the break down of tooth structure, is caused by the effect of acid on the teeth that leads to decay. "Sipping or holding acidic drinks in the mouth before swallowing increases the risk of erosion on dental enamel," says Dr. Phillips.

Enamel, the thin, outer layer of teeth, helps maintain tooth structure and shape while protecting it from decay. Soft drinks contain acids that break the tooth surfaces, damaging tooth enamel by dissolving the structure of teeth. Some "athletic drinks" similar to Gatorade can have a low PH that can start the erosion of tooth enamel.

Repeated exposure to acid causes the tooth's enamel to lose shape and color and look yellow over time. Tooth erosion can also be caused by gastric reflux from the stomach ("GERD") and some eating disorders (bulimia, etc). "Often erosion due to excess stomach acid is noticed by us before the problem has been diagnosed by the patient's physician," Dr. Phillips states. It is critical to address this type of problem before lasting damage occurs to the esophagus by chronic acid exposure.

To prevent erosion, Dr. Phillips advises patients who eat or drink an acidic food or beverage to wait at least 20 minutes before brushing the teeth so as not to destroy the weakened enamel. He also suggests eating acidic foods just at meal times instead of snacking on them throughout the day, to minimize the amount of time the acid is on the teeth.

Also, frequent eating and snacking on foods with a low

**Example of  
Tooth  
Erosion**



pH (*potential of hydrogen*) value, such as fruit juices, pickles, fresh fruit, yogurt, honey and raisins can lead to irreversible dental erosion.

Dr. Phillips says, "It's not what you eat and drink that's as important as how you consume acidic food." To help prevent erosion, he also encourages some patients to consider dentin bonding. This adds a thin layer to tooth surfaces with signs of erosion, yet leaves a natural look and feel.

Together, with dietary advice and daily desensitizing toothpaste, the aim is to prevent and treat early or moderate signs of erosion on the teeth. Early signs of tooth erosion consist of dentin hypersensitivity, which is indicated by sensitivity or pain in the mouth to hot or cold.

## Pancreatic Cancer ... From Front

disease could lead to increased pancreatic carcinogenesis because of the high levels of oral bacteria and nitrosamines (which are carcinogens), in the mouth. Prior studies have shown that nitrosamines and gastric acidity may play a role in pancreatic cancer.

Naturally, as more research is conducted, we will keep you informed. For now, please know that Dr. Phillips has structured your regular cleanings and check-ups to help you maintain a healthy mouth and minimize the risk factors that contribute to the formation of gum disease. Be committed to your regular care visits and encourage those you love to do so as well! Those smiles are directly connected to their overall health, as is being evidenced all the time!

## Resolve To **STOP** **Smoking** In **2008**

**Sooner is best, but later is better than not at all**

**A** study of 35,000 British male doctors and their smoking habits stands out as perhaps one of the most important ever. When early results were published in 1954, it was the first really solid evidence that smoking causes lung cancer. In June 2004 – 50 years to the day after that initial report – the *British Medical Journal* published an article summarizing a half century's worth of mortality data on the British physicians. Some key points are:

- **Nonsmokers live about 10 years longer than smokers.**
- **Quitting at age 60, 50, 40, or 30 adds, respectively, 3, 6, 9, or 10 years to life expectancy.**
- **The life expectancy of ex-smokers is about the same as it is for those who never smoked if they quit between ages 35 - 44.**

Even quitting between the ages of 55 - 64 helps ex-smokers live longer than smokers, although their life expectancy lags behind those who never smoked. If you're a smoker, also remember that oral tissues are significantly affected by tobacco smoke.

The American Academy of Periodontology cites tobacco use as one of the most significant risk factors in the development and progression of periodontal disease. Smoking also impairs healing after dental procedures, making you more susceptible to infection and complications.

***With all the reasons to quit, is there a good reason to keep smoking? Set your sites for a healthier, smoke-free new year!***

## Your Recommendations Are Most Welcome!

We are always pleased to welcome new patients to our office. Your recommendations to others are the highest compliments we can receive.

**THANK YOU!**