

# *Brazos Family Dentistry*

# TOOTH TALK



Produced for the Patients of Brazos Family Dentistry

Spring 2009



**fromthedentists**

## Toothbrush Evolution

### Dental trivia

The earliest toothbrushes were small twigs mashed at one end for better cleaning. Roman nobles had their teeth cleaned by special slaves. The bristled brush we're more familiar with was probably invented by the Chinese, and it was exported to Europe during the seventeenth century. It became very popular with French dentists. Over the next century tooth brushing caught on in North America, and eventually nylon replaced natural bristles in toothbrushes.

After World War II, Swiss inventors developed the first electric toothbrush, introduced in North America in 1960. What must have seemed like a very strange machine at the time became an immediate success, and today there are about 3,000 toothbrush patents. Oh, the wonders of evolution!

*Yours in good dental health,*

*Dr. Russell Ross &  
Dr. Crystell Billman*

## turnthepage

Get your sizzle back!

Keep oral cancer at bay!

Healthy gums: facts & tips!

## Make The Wise Choice

**& achieve optimal dental health**

Regularly climbing into our hygiene chair can mean gaining better health, better looks, and even staying out of the dental chair! When you consider that oral disease can be silent and symptom-free and that research has linked oral disease with other health problems, making regular hygiene appointments is definitely your wisest choice. Our hygienists, Cindy and Kim, are great advocates for your dental health! They always greet you with a smile and are happy to help when it comes to keeping your teeth and gums healthy.

People often misinterpret hygiene appointments ... they're not just a simple cleaning. Here's what happens when you're here:

- We examine your gums to screen for areas at risk. If you have periodontal disease, your healing progress is monitored with detail. Regular cleaning will help keep your gums and teeth as healthy as possible.
- Prevention is a crucial part of your visit. Regular appointments allow us to catch problems in their early stages before things get out of hand.
- Take advantage of our knowledge! Your appointment is also a wonderful opportunity to ask all the questions you



**Kim,  
Hygienist**

**Cindy,  
Hygienist**

have about how restorative and cosmetic dentistry, and even broader topics such as how medications affect your oral health. In short, if you've got the questions, we've got the time.

- We provide patient education and demonstrations for correct brushing and flossing, explain proper cleaning and maintenance for dentures, crowns and bridges, and orthodontics.

Please ensure that you are scheduled for ... and that you commit to making the date. Cindy and Kim will help ensure your optimum oral health so you can enjoy a clean, great-looking smile.



**LEFT:** Without brushing and flossing, bacteria have the potential to damage your gums which could eventually lead to tooth loss.

**RIGHT:** Research has shown that we see teeth as whiter when they are surrounded by pink gums.

*Thank you for all your referrals. We appreciate them!*

## 4 STEPS ... *In 3 minutes!*

Flossing for three minutes once a day is essential to clean between your teeth and at the gumline where gum disease can take root. Choose a regular time, like bedtime, and a floss that works best for you – thick or thin, flavored or unflavored, waxed or unwaxed.

*Floss each tooth thoroughly with a clean section of floss...*

- Wind 18" of floss around the middle fingers of each hand. Pinch 1-2" of floss between your thumbs and index fingers.
- Use thumbs to direct floss between upper then lower teeth.
- Gently guide floss between your teeth by using a zigzag motion.
- Contour floss around the side of each tooth. Gently slide it up and down against each tooth surface and under the gumline until your teeth are "squeaky" clean.



## Are You Progressing?

Why the answer just might surprise you!

**Periodontal disease.** The name has kind of a high falutin' ring to it. That's true of most Latin-based medical names. Believe us when we say that there's nothing grandiose about pain, bleeding, tooth loss, and bone loss due to inflammatory gum disease. This disease develops gradually over time if the natural film on your teeth is allowed to accumulate, damage your gums, and interfere with the balance of oral bacteria.

### Periodontal disease is progressive...

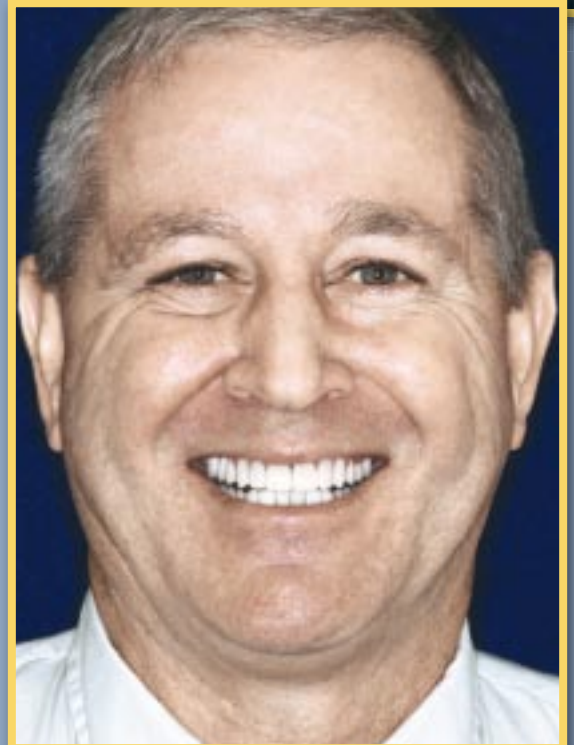
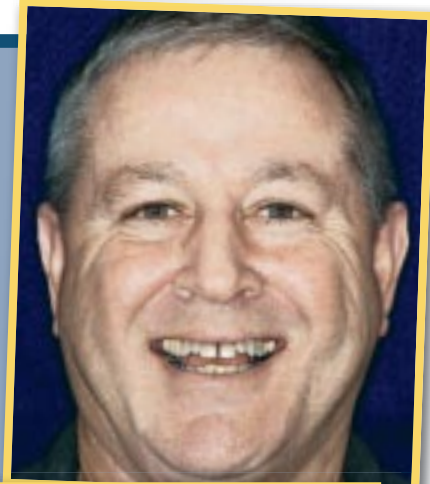
**Gingivitis:** Although healthy intact gums or gingivae act as a protective barrier against destructive bacteria, once damaged, they lose their effectiveness. Initially you might be symptom-free or experience mild symptoms of infection such as redness, swelling, and slight bleeding during brushing. This stage is relatively simple to treat and reverse.

**Periodontitis:** This is a more advanced infection, damaging the underlying ligaments and bone. Without intervention, your gums will shrivel away and expose your tooth roots, leading eventually to tooth loss.

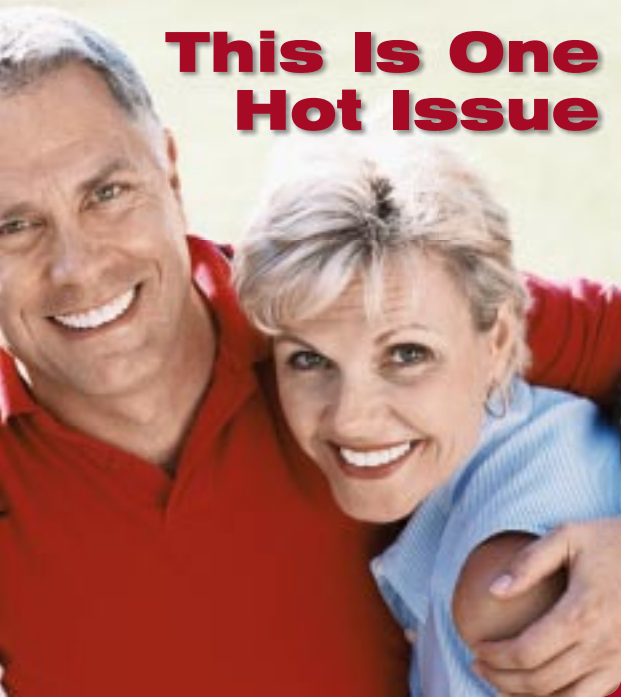
### There are known risk factors for periodontal disease...

- **Tobacco consumption.**
- **Hormonal changes** during adolescence, pregnancy, mid-life.
- **Challenges to the immune system** including poor nutrition, stress, and systemic diseases like diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and arthritis.
- **Side effects from some medications.**
- **Clenching or grinding your teeth.**
- **Heredity.**
- **Barriers to good oral hygiene** include crowded teeth, ageing fillings and restorations, inconsistent home care routines, and missed recare appointments to remove plaque buildup and prevent gum disease.

**Call us for an appointment – any time!**







## This Is One Hot Issue

### Find out why you need to know about it

Scientists believe that chronic inflammation may be at the root of many debilitating illnesses. Imagine how much suffering could be relieved with a single magic-bullet solution that would cure or prevent inflammatory illnesses like heart disease, arthritis, cancers ...and gum disease.

Inflammation is your body's reaction to threatening pathogens. When the enemy has been destroyed,

inflammation should retreat until the next battle. That's called transitory inflammation. When the process stalls out and inflammation continues instead, the body attacks healthy cells in the absence of an invader. Scientists speculate that a long-running bacterial infection like gum disease can actually tip your body's balance toward chronic inflammation.

*Gum disease has been associated with inflammatory diseases that include...*

**Osteoarthritis** and **rheumatoid arthritis**

**Diabetes**

**Cardiovascular diseases**

**Lung infections**

Gum disease has also been associated with some **cancers**, complications of **pregnancy** and delivery, **osteoporosis**, and **kidney diseases** among other **systemic illnesses**. Monitoring of oral health is essential for everyone, but particularly if you suffer from a chronic inflammatory or systemic disease. Please keep us up to date so that we can optimize your oral care.

## Practice Makes Perfect

### Word to the wise!

Wise people practiced green fashion long before it became environmentally chic. Investing in classic quality pieces has always been the quintessential way to avoid unnecessary waste and expense. Same with your smile! When you invest in your oral health, two things happen. First, you avoid a lifetime of increasingly extensive and expensive dental work. And second, there's a bonus ... you can choose cosmetic procedures – dental or otherwise – with confidence.

Think about it. What is the point of cosmetically rejuvenating your face only to reveal puffy receding gums, or discolored, crooked, chipped or fractured teeth?

If you've never liked the look of your smile, or if your sizzle has aged into a sputter, we can provide cosmetic enhancements like teeth whitening, bonding, porcelain veneers, and gum sculpting. With oral health, the choice is yours.

Your healthy smile – it's sustainable – and empowering!



## Live Life Well

### Fight oral cancer

Knowing that the *lifestyle choices* you make can affect your risk for oral cancer is an important step toward its prevention. Although people who smoke or use smokeless tobacco remain at highest risk, for the great majority of those who do not use tobacco, dietary choices and physical activity are the most important modifiable factors of cancer risk.

Here are the *American Cancer Society's* recommendations for individual choices:

1. Eat a variety of *healthful foods*, with an emphasis on plant sources.
2. Adopt a *physically active* lifestyle.
3. Maintain a *healthful weight* throughout life.
4. If you drink alcoholic beverages, *limit consumption*. Alcohol combined with tobacco increases the risk of oral cancers.

Your other most important step? Regular dental exams. Oral cancer can be caught early, even as a pre-cancer.



# Could I Have Oral Cancer?

The *American Cancer Society* estimates about 35,310 new cases (25,310 in men and 10,000 in women) of oral cavity and oropharyngeal cancer will be diagnosed in the United States in 2008. An estimated 7,590 people (5,210 men and 2,380 women) will die of these cancers in 2008.

## Oral cavity cancers occur most commonly in the following sites:

- the tongue  
(about 20% to 25%)
- the floor of the mouth  
(about 15%)
- the lip  
(about 10% to 15%)
- the minor salivary glands  
(about 10% to 15%)

The rest are found in the gums, tonsils, and other sites.

The average age of most people diagnosed with these cancers is 62, but they can occur in young people. Although they occur rarely in children, about one-third of the cancers occur in patients younger than 55. This is why we recommend having an annual Oral Cancer Screening. The exam is simple, painless, and non-invasive. It helps the dentist and hygienist detect what they can't see with unaided eyes. We can evaluate and monitor suspicious areas at their earliest stages before there is any progression toward life-threatening conditions.

**Early detection is the key to reducing the devastating impact of oral cancer on victims and their families, so do yourself a favor and call to schedule your Oral Cancer Screening today.**

## officeinformation

**Brazos Family Dentistry**  
**Drs. Russell Ross & Crystell Billman**  
 3620 Scroggins Drive  
 Waco, TX 76705-2579

### Office Hours

Monday 8:00 am – 5:00 pm  
 Tuesday 7:00 am – 7:00 pm  
 Wednesday 7:00 am – 7:00 pm  
 Thursday 7:00 am – 7:00 pm  
 Friday 7:00 am – 2:30 pm

### Contact Information

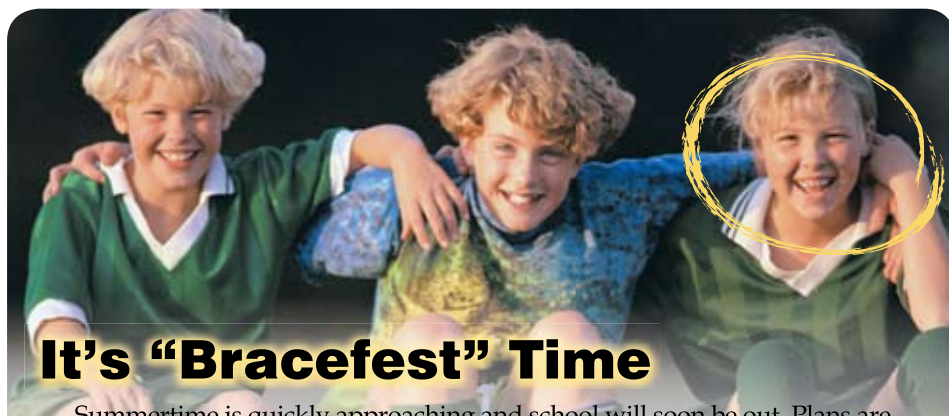
Office (254) 799-5746  
 Fax (254) 799-4115  
 Email [info@brazosfamilydentistry.com](mailto:info@brazosfamilydentistry.com)  
 Web site [www.brazosfamilydentistry.com](http://www.brazosfamilydentistry.com)

### Office Staff

Melinda ..... Office Manager  
 Amy ..... Appointment Coordinator  
 Terri ..... Insurance Coordinator  
 Kelly ..... Hygiene Coordinator  
 Cindy, Kim ..... Hygienists  
 Joy, Diana, Bea ..... Dental Assistants



CareCredit



## It's "Bracefest" Time

Summertime is quickly approaching and school will soon be out. Plans are being made for fun vacations and other exciting adventures. But did you know this is the time of year many of our patients elect to begin orthodontic treatment either for themselves or their children? That's right! If your goal is to have braces on before the next school year begins, it's best to start planning now. To get you started, we're offering our "Bracefest" Special to kick off the season. Call and schedule an appointment today to receive \$100 off new orthodontic treatment. Please, share this savings with your friends and family members. We have helped create miles of smiles at *Brazos Family Dentistry* for many people... so let's get started on your smile today!

**Bracefest Special!**

**\$100 off**

**new orthodontic cases started prior to September 1, 2009.**