



March, 2009

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**5100 Station Way  
Sarasota, FL 34233**

## ***Your Dental Health Hygiene and Preventive Maintenance***

As an extension of February's pediatric dentistry month I thought I would discuss the value of preventative measures. Most of us are familiar with the widely recommended dental cleaning every six months but I get asked often "Why, everything seems fine." Even in a seemingly comfortable environment there are a lot of potential problems lurking.

The American Academy of Periodontology recommends an exam and cleaning with fluoride every six months. For those who currently have or have had a history of periodontal disease, a cleaning is advised every 3 months.

There are many reasons for these recommendations. First off, the human mouth is home to hundreds of different bacteria and viruses. Under normal circumstances there is a comfortable balance between our immune system and these microbes. Any number of things can turn the tides and often times it takes a dental cleaning to again regain this balance. One of the most important functions of a dental cleaning is to disrupt the colonization of these microbes and to place a fluoride varnish which helps the body kill off the invasive bacteria as well as strengthen the teeth. The patients conventional brushing and flossing often cannot reach into all the areas the microbes hide and it takes the dentist or hygienist to effectively clean these areas out. This routine resets the base line and again allows the patient to maintain the health of their mouth until the next cleaning visit.

Also included and an important part of your dental cleaning, is the reviewing of proper and new cleaning techniques and products to assist the patient in maintaining a healthy mouth. We often recommend a patient change their toothpaste for 2-3 months to take advantage of different medicaments found in different toothpastes. In addition, adding any one of various mouth rinses for a short while can continue to give the patient the upper hand in controlling the microbes.

It has often been said that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure and this statement hold true to dental prevention as well. Remember ... most dental infections don't hurt until it is too late. If you have questions or would like to schedule a cleaning or consult with one of our doctors, feel free to call us at 941-924-7571.

Scott Dickinson, D.M.D.