



January 2015 Update

Happy Healthy New year to all our patients.

*“ Vik do my crown first..no do my veneers first..no I was here first do my implant first”
and then a horrible noise from my alarm clock woke me up from my ecstatic dream.*

I woke up to a realization that I had a whole day of routine check ups on patients who had diligently followed the advice of their dental team and now are in a ‘safe zone’ of dental fitness, hopefully harms way from dental disease and require no further immediate treatment. Wonderful, stress free day.

Yet, I often find myself caught up in a tug of war of opposite desires. On one hand I trained for five years in how to fill, repair and rebuild failing mouths. On the other hand as an ethical professional it is my duty to educate and motivate all those who put their trust in my hands in the ways of preventing dental disease. Former is often more satisfying as it allows me to exercise my skills and practice what I was trained for. The latter is good for the soul. Sadly, call it human nature, most patients only appreciate the tangible treatment when I create something in the mouth. Does it look good? Was it pain free? And so on.

The advice on how to clean better or that given by hygienist on use of floss or small brushes etc often falls on deaf ears. Dental professional’s frustration is felt when I read comments in the hygienists notes.. ‘patient not interested in oral hygiene instructions..’

So, please if nothing else get your money’s worth. If you are not sure of any technique, stop the hygienist and ask her to show again or better still do it yourself looking in the mirror while she watches and guides you.

Looking down the day list I regularly note at least 30% of the patients who had not been for a year, two years or more. A common response, when asked the reason for absence, is resounding “we never got a reminder from Tina”. Which leads me on to our next topic.

Automated reminders, recalls and chase ups:

We had an excellent reminder system. However, this involved considerable time each day for Tina to implement it manually. There are many of you of the old school who feel that you don’t need reminders at all. “ it is in my diary, I wont forget , is often the remark”. If only everyone took the same view, but they don’t.

At dene dental I try to keep up to date in all aspects of the provision of dental care. That includes managing your reminders. So, we have now automated our recall reminder system. There will be hiccups. My request is please bear with it. Your feedbacks are welcome. **YOU WILL RECEIVE SEVERAL REMINDERS. One 2 weeks before, another one a week before and one two days before the appointment.** You can now reply to the text directly. Just text ‘Ok’ to confirm.

Even if you have confirmed after the first reminder you will continue to get the other reminders at the pre set intervals. Current system only allows for all or nothing. After an initial period we will monitor and refine the system.

At your next visit Tina will ask you for your mobile phone number and email address. Tina will be more than happy to remind you on your landline if you do not use a mobile or have an email account.

The new system will automatically search for those who have fallen through the net, due to failed appointments or cancelled appointments, and send them reminders of overdue check up. This is then recorded on your notes. We hope we have done our bit to help you organize.

Finally, please pencil in all your future appointments whilst you are at the practice, even if you are not sure. You will get plenty of notice to change the same near the time. At least this way you are still in the system.

We have over 1000 patients on our books. I should be frothing at the mouth trying to cope. But not all of you keep up with regular attendance. **It is no big secret that regular attendance and maintenance with a repetition of good advice is the only way to maintain healthy mouths.**

Hygienists play a major role in maintaining your oral health. *My advice to everyone is that they visit the hygienist at least once a year, preferably in between seeing me.* It is my desire to improve access to the hygienists by increasing the number of days they are available. The aim is three days in a week.

Hygienist appointments, Cancellations and failures:

Hygienist's time is no less valuable than that of the dentist. Recently, Last minute cancellations especially by means of an answer phone message or an email sent on a Sunday have increased to a level that I felt the need to make a note. In comparison I have almost negligible failed appointments or indeed last minute cancellations.

Hygienist's appointments are precious as they only work one day per week. To improve choice we have introduced another day, Thursday, as well as one Saturday per month... If there are issues regarding any of the hygienists please let me know. Your complaint will be treated in confidence.

Teeth for Life Members Club:

Complete transparency has always been at the heart of my management. I have enclosed the new 2015 fee schedule along with the **Teeth for life member's program.**

There is a slight increase in monthly premiums for both memberships. Please note despite fee increases on some laboratory items, the membership discounts will reduce these fees below the 2014 prices.

Silver members also get a 10% discount on Hygienist fees. i.e. as a Silver member you will pay £49.50 instead of £55 pay as you go fee for your hygienist visit.

The policy of allowing patients to become members, once they have been diagnosed with treatment and hence benefit from the discount, will come to an end from January 2015.

So, don't lose out, speak to Tina before it is too late. Potential Savings can be huge.

" We did not ponder over how much were we paying and how much more is it costing us to become members. We looked at the monthly premium and the service we receive in return and decided to become members. Every thing else was a bonus."

- Comment from a couple who recently became **Silver members.**

Need I add more? Have a happy healthy prosperous new year.

Vik.

10 REASONS WHY SEE THE HYGIENIST

- 1) **To Prevent Gum Disease** – Gum Disease is an infection in the Gum Tissue and Bone, that keep your teeth in place and one of the leading causes of adult tooth loss. If diagnosed early, it can be treated and reversed. If treatment is not received, a more serious and advanced stage of gum disease may follow. Regular Hygienist sessions and examinations, daily flossing and brushing twice a day will prevent Gum Disease!
- 2) **To Maintain Good Physical and Medical Health** – Recent studies have shown the heart attacks and strokes are linked to Gum Disease. A Hygienist session every 3 months will keep your teeth and gums healthy and reduce the risk of Heart Disease and Strokes! As well as many other conditions such as diabetes and arthritis.
- 3) **To Prevent Bad Breath** – Dental studies have shown 85% of people suffer from bad breath, also known as halitosis, have a dental problem that is to blame. Good oral hygiene is essential to prevent bad breath. Regular visits to your Hygienist will ensure that your breath always stays fresh!
- 4) **To Keep Your Teeth** – by preventing Gum Disease it gives you the best possible chance to keep your teeth for as long as possible. Keeping your teeth means better chewing function and better health!
- 5) **To Have a Bright and White Smile** – your dental hygienist will remove most staining from smoking, tea or coffee. During your periodontal session your hygienist will also polish your teeth to a beautiful shine. The result? A whiter and brighter smile!
- 6) **To Detect Dental Problems Early** – the hygienist can detect early problems with your teeth and gums such as cavities, broken fillings and Gum Disease. These are easily treatable. If these problems go untreated, root canals, gum surgery and tooth removals may be the only treatment options available.
- 7) **To Maintain Good Oral Health** – your hygienist will help ensure you are maintaining good oral health by visual examination and comparing with previous dental records. If you are falling off track with your oral hygiene, then your hygienist will guide you back to the right path.
- 8) **To Use Your Dental Insurance Plan** – your dental insurance plan covers you to have hygienist treatment sessions and dental examinations every 6 months without any charges. Take advantage of this and save a lot of money in the long run by avoiding costly dental treatment that can result from poor oral hygiene!
- 9) **Act as a second back up check-** Hygienists are not dentists but are used to looking in the mouth as much as the dentist. So, if they see something that concerns them they can ask you to see me before your next check up is due.
- 10) **To Prevent Oral Cancer** – According to The Oral Cancer Foundation, someone dies from oral cancer, of every hour of every day in the United Kingdom alone. When you are having your dental cleaning done, the Hygienists are screening you for oral cancer, which is highly curable if diagnosed early!

A word about X-rays:

There is no guideline or consensus as to how often 'Screening' x-rays should be taken. Having taken over a fairly discerning patient base with above average oral hygiene I felt once every 3 to 4 years would be adequate and keep the exposure to radiation down. However, recently I have been caught out. Even patients with good clean mouths have come up with cavities, on the x-ray, not visible to normal examination.

We feel we do a thorough job giving good advice on prevention. So, what is going wrong?

DIET- the only factor that causes decay we cannot control.

You can get an A* from the hygienist which will keep gum disease at bay but unless this is coupled with good low sugar diet and sensible eating habits you will succumb to cavities.

So, for the majority I have reduced the frequency of screening x-rays to once every 2 years.

Chemical helping hand for your oral hygiene regime:

Most patients use a mouthwash of sorts whether we recommend it or not. Hygienist's are puritans and feel mechanical cleaning with a brush should suffice if done properly. Given the fact that 40% of our patients are in their 80's and likely to need their teeth for next 20 years by current statistics, I have decided to break with tradition and suggest the following Nocturnal Chemical Regime:

1. Day one *brush* your teeth at night with *neat salt* using a wet brush. Rinse after you have done all your teeth.
 2. Day two *brush* your teeth at night with Corsodyl Daily mouthwash. Don't rinse after, go straight to bed.
 3. Day three *brush* your teeth with (3 % / 10 Vol) Hydrogen Peroxide mouthwash. Rinse after if felt necessary.
- On the fourth day and after repeat the same sequence.

Double edge sword of a growing reputation:

Tina recently conveyed to me a sentiment expressed by a satisfied patient. " Vik is a famous expensive dentist." A warm glow of mixed emotions came over me. I was happy with famous but "Expensive" kept digging at my sides. After some mulling I consoled myself with the thought that I rather be Famous than Infamous and Expensive than Cheap. Our service speaks for itself.

Compared like for like we represent good value for money. Our entry level prevention items such as regular checks and hygiene visits are very affordable for the private market. Simple answer would be to keep regular attendance as per recommended intervals and reduce the risk of extensive and expensive long courses of treatment.

Better still, become a **Teeth For Life Member**. Financial commitment is a good motivator.

Teeth Whitening and Braces for Straight Teeth and a Bright Smile:

I can straighten your teeth with Clear Plastic invisible Aligners or with the latest FASTBRACES technology from the states, which takes months less than the conventional braces.

Follow this, with At Home Teeth Whitening and perhaps some of my 'stuck on' white fillings to improve the shape and size of your teeth, and you have achieved your Bright smile with all Non Invasive procedures. No need for Crowns or veneers or any drilling!!!!

YOU ONLY HAVE TO ASK.