



Dr.Caldwell's Tooth Talk

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Quick Thinking!

New technology is awesome and can help us in ways we never think of. Recently, one of our savvy mom's snapped a quick picture with her cell phone of her son's mouth injury. The injury involved one of his permanent teeth and occurred after regular business hours on a Sunday afternoon. Mom called our office and was prompted on how to reach Dr. Caldwell for emergencies.

Due to the quick thinking of this mom, she was able to "text" the picture to Dr. Caldwell, who then was able to assess the injury, set the mom's mind at ease, and make a decision as to whether it was necessary for them to be seen in the office immediately.

Parents, **please** check out our web site where you will find **detailed** information regarding: What to do for "Knocked Out" Permanent Teeth, Fractured Teeth, Lip and Gum Lacerations as well as answers to many Frequently Asked Questions.

Please also note that you may call our office anytime twenty four hours a day, seven days a week and myself or another Pedodontist will be on call for such emergencies. It is not uncommon for us to meet patients in our office for emergencies during the evening hours or on weekends.

Dental Sealants

Many of the foods you or your child eat, especially those high in sugar and starches, cause the bacteria that normally occurs in your mouth to produce acids. If this acidic plaque isn't removed from your teeth by daily brushing and flossing, tooth decay will occur.

Even if you brush and floss regularly, some teeth, especially the back molars, can be difficult to clean because of their shape. The chewing surface of the molars have tiny grooves, called pits and fissures, that can be so deep and/or narrow that the bristles of your toothbrush can't reach down into them to clean out the plaque. Also, the enamel at the deepest part of the groove is frequently thinner, giving any plaque that does form an easier time of penetrating through.

To protect a tooth that is deeply grooved, your dentist can apply a plastic resin material called a dental sealant. The sealant levels out the grooves in the tooth, making the tooth smoother and more even so it is easier to clean, and seals the surface, protecting it from the acid attacks of plaque.

Since the 1970s, the widespread exposure to fluoride, in water, toothpaste and

mouthwash, has lowered the incidence of tooth decay on the smooth surfaces of the teeth. However, fluoride is not as successful at preventing pit and fissure decay on the chewing surfaces of the teeth. Since pit and fissure decay is the most common form of tooth decay for children and teens, dental sealants are utilized as a preventive measure to protect a child's teeth during the years in which they are most likely to experience tooth decay.

Dental sealants aren't just for children, however. Adults can benefit from dental sealants, too. Any tooth that has the deep pits and fissures that place it at risk for tooth decay should be sealed. The only requirements for sealing are that a tooth have deep fissures and pits and that the patient be of an age and disposition to cooperate with the dentist during the procedure.

The sealing process itself is very simple. The surface of the tooth to be sealed must be clean for the material to adhere, so first your dentist will scrub the surface. Next, an "etching" gel will be applied on the area that is to be sealed. Once the surface has been prepared so that the sealant will bond well, the tooth is cleaned and dried. Keeping the tooth dry is very important, as it determines the quality of the bond between enamel and sealant. Your dentist then 'paints' the sealant onto the tooth and uses a special light to 'cure' the material.

If the tooth was kept properly dry during the application process, the dental sealant can last from five to ten years, or even longer, keeping your or your child's tooth healthy and protected from decay.

Does Your Child Have Bad Breath?

Bad breath can be an embarrassing problem for children, as well as parents. Bad breath, or halitosis, can be a symptom of various conditions including: postnasal drip, dry mouth, dental problems, and sinusitis. Halitosis in children is often due to the decomposition of mucus secretions and debris which accumulate on the tongue, in the nose, and between the teeth.

Halitosis is an offensive odor which comes from the mouth, nose, or airway. It is also defined as exhaled air containing more than 75 parts per billion of odor-producing volatile sulfur compounds.

If your child has any symptoms such as nasal drainage, allergies and sinusitis, check with your child's pediatrician regarding treatments.