

Brace Connection Newsletter

Summer 2010



BEL AIR
ORTHODONTICS

Stephen L. Godwin, DMD, DMSc

Shaping Smiles - Shaping Lives

*Welcome to our
newsletter designed just
for you, our professional
friends and partners.*

*The Brace Connection is
designed to keep you
updated on the latest
orthodontic news and
fun activities at Bel Air
Orthodontics.*

*As always, we're
interested in your
opinions, comments and
feedback. Feel free to
contact us any time at
410-838-2244 or
email us at
info@belairortho.com.*

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*For additional copies of our
newsletter, visit us on the web at
www.belairortho.com/fordentists*

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Ask the Doctor . . .



Each quarter, Dr. Godwin will address your most frequently asked questions. We hope that you'll find the answers interesting and useful in your practice. Do you have a question about orthodontics? If so, email us at info@belairortho.com. If your question is featured in an upcoming newsletter, your office name will be entered into our quarterly drawing for a chance to win **Lunch On Us**. This quarter's newsletter addresses questions regarding our oral hygiene program.

Q. How do you educate your patients about good oral hygiene?

A. During the first new patient visit, I emphasize the importance of good oral hygiene and discuss how poor oral hygiene results in cavities. If poor oral hygiene is observed during the clinical exam, I provide oral hygiene instruction and orthodontic care is delayed until oral hygiene habits are improved. Patients are advised to have a dental exam and cleaning with their family dentist prior to beginning orthodontic treatment.

Q. What type of oral hygiene instruction and monitoring do your patients receive once orthodontic treatment begins?

A. After placing the braces, the staff introduces the patient to proper orthodontic oral hygiene techniques using a slide show. The slide show covers all aspects of dental care and includes a discussion regarding the effectiveness of mechanical toothbrushes and the Waterpik. The staff stresses the importance of biannual visits to the family dentist for regular checkups and cleanings. At subsequent visits, my staff and I rate the oral hygiene of a patient as "Effective" or "Ineffective". Evidence of plaque accumulation or gingival inflammation will produce an Ineffective rating. An Effective rating is rewarded with tokens as part of our Teamwork, Tokens and Treasures Program.

Q. What steps do you and your staff take if a patient's oral hygiene does not improve?

A. My staff and I will re-educate the patient about proper oral hygiene techniques. Parents are notified about the need for improvement and are invited to join in the re-education process. The patient must demonstrate adequate tooth brushing technique prior to completion of the appointment. Should a patient repeat their Ineffective rating at the next visit, my staff applies a fluoride varnish to the teeth and provides additional instruction. I will also prescribe a prescription strength fluoride toothpaste and may suggest investment in a mechanical toothbrush and/or Waterpik. Parents are advised that a third repeated Ineffective rating will result in early removal of braces. Braces will be reapplied when the patient demonstrates consistent good oral hygiene habits.

Q. How do you address white spots discovered after the removal of braces?

A. To promote re-mineralization of white spots, a patient is given a tube of MI Paste upon removal of his/her braces. If the MI Paste is not sufficient to resolve the white spot lesion, dental bleaching, cosmetic bonding or veneers may be necessary. In the near future, micro-invasive treatment of the white spots using products like Icon resin infiltrant may provide an effective alternative, restoring a healthy beautiful smile.

The Numbers Show Our Tokens Program Is As Popular As Ever. . .

Our Teamwork, Tokens and Treasures program continues to be a big hit with both children and adults alike taking part each month. Last year alone, over 8000 tokens were turned in and redeemed for great prizes like gift cards to Hollister, Best Buy and Starbucks, just to name a few. Creating a healthy, happy smile requires a team approach. The Teamwork, Tokens & Treasures program is part of an ongoing effort to educate, motivate, and reward patients who understand their importance to the orthodontic team. At every visit, our patients can earn tokens for good oral hygiene and compliance in orthodontic treatment. The program is a great way for us to provide positive reinforcement and consistently stress the importance of good oral hygiene habits.

To emphasize the importance of regular dental checkups, bonus tokens are rewarded to patients who return their signed Cavity Buster's Coupon after visiting their family dentist for a regular checkup and cleaning. We appreciate your feedback, so feel free to use the Cavity Buster's Coupon to communicate any concerns regarding the patient's dental health. For more information on our Tokens Program, Cavity Buster's Program, or to print a Cavity Buster's Coupon, visit our website at www.belairortho.com.



Have You Ever Wondered Where All Those Missing Retainers Go?

Well, our patients have some amazing stories to tell. Fact, fiction or just plain silly . . . only our patients know for sure. All we ask is that the stories entertain us, and many of our patients deliver just that. We thought we'd share a few of the stories we have received. We hope you'll enjoy them as much as we have! This will be a regular feature in our newsletters, so look for more fun stories to come.

The Legend of Leakybottom

One lonely autumn day, a stranger passed the old water tower. It had stood at the top of the hill in the old rundown neighborhood of Leakybottom.

This old neighborhood had served its purpose for many kids, growing up and then moving on, as life dictates. "Well", thought the stranger standing on the hill. "Life in Leakybottom is about to change!"



Over the next few months, news of raids and pillaging of local orthodontic facilities would find themselves in the pages of the local newspaper and finally into the county paper as the attacks grew fiercer. The children of Leakybottom were also under attack, but not in a lecherous way as you would suspect. Rather, they were being attacked in a toothy sense. When questioned by the authorities about their experience with the stranger, the children would say things like, "He helped me" or "He's the greatest man in the world." A stranger wearing a dark trench coat had often been seen and questioned at the crime scenes, but could never be connected to the crimes.

One sunny morning in Leakybottom, a little boy named Tommy was playing with his toy truck in the sandbox. Suddenly, he threw his truck in an adolescent rage. The retainer he had to wear was driving him crazy! As he went to pick up his truck, a voice wandered into his ear and stuck there like a velvet knife. "Why so vexed, little boy?", the stranger asked. "I have to wear this stupid retainer", he replied, surprised he had said anything to a stranger. His mommy had always told him not to talk to strangers. "You mean that beautiful, gleaming thing you're sporting?", said the stranger, coming out of the shadows and into the playground. "You should be proud to wear something so . . . majestic." "You like this thing?", said Tommy unaware of the trap he'd fallen into. "You can have it if you want it." "No, no that would be rude of me to take away your pride and joy. The precious gift that is giving you that beautiful smile.", the stranger said. "Oh, please take it", said Tommy. "Well, if you insist. I guess I could take it off your hands," the stranger said barely hiding a grin.

And so, the toothy attacks continued until all the braces, headgear and retainers were gone from Leakybottom along with all the beautiful smiles they created!

The End



How Does Insurance Cover The Cost of Orthodontics?

Today, more and more dental insurance plans are offering orthodontic benefits. We understand that insurance reimbursement can be a confusing and time-consuming task; therefore, our staff is happy to assist your patients in verifying their coverage, filing their claims, and working with them to maximize their insurance reimbursement for covered services.

Bel Air Orthodontics is currently enrolled as a participating provider with MetLife Dental, Delta Dental and United Concordia NFFS Plans. As a participating provider, we have agreed to maintain fees within the carrier’s “Maximum Allowable Charges” for orthodontic services provided to your patients. Since our participation is not a “guarantee” of coverage, please have your patients call our office to verify their eligibility. While we remain non-participating with other carriers, your patients often remain eligible for out-of-network orthodontic benefits with our office; therefore, you can feel comfortable referring patients with both in and out-of-network coverage. Our insurance coordinator, Helen, will provide a comprehensive overview of insurance and will file claims as a courtesy with both in and out-of-network carriers.

Orthodontic benefits are usually paid as a one-time, lifetime benefit, and benefits are payable based on a pre-determined co-pay established by the carrier. Since most dental plans pay only a portion of the orthodontic fee, we offer a variety of convenient payment plans designed to make orthodontic treatment affordable. Our financial coordinator will assist your patients in developing a payment plan suited specifically to their needs. The first step to a healthier smile begins with a comprehensive orthodontic evaluation. We’re happy to offer your patients a complimentary evaluation to determine their orthodontic needs. For more information on insurance and financing plans, visit our website at www.belairortho.com.



Sizzling Summer Raffle Results Are In . . .

The results are in, and congratulations go to the following raffle winners whose names were randomly chosen from all those who participated:

- Clearly Dental (Drs. Walter & Seidman)
- Smile Makers (Office of Dr. Rajim Harari)
- Office of Dr. Thomas Kleman
- Office of Dr. Stephen Cockey
- Office of Dr. Nahid Shahry

Team members from each of the winning offices received gift certificates to Rita’s for refreshing summertime treats! Thanks to all who participated and made our Summer Raffle a success.



Look for our Fall Raffle heading your way soon. Remember, you’ve got to play to win . . . So send it in!



What Are Your Patient’s Teeth Worth?

Oil’s hit \$100 a barrel, gold’s at \$1000 an ounce, but the real winner may be inside the mouths of your patients. Delta Dental’s Annual Tooth Fairy Price Poll reveals that per-tooth prices jumped 22% this year to a whopping \$2.09 per tooth on average. With a 22% increase this year, the Tooth Fairy Index outstripped the NASDAQ and the Dow Jones Industrial Average, both of which decreased while tooth prices skyrocketed. Tooth Fairy expert, Rosemary Wells, of the Northwestern University School of Dentistry tracked the Tooth Fairy’s generosity extensively and checked her yearly prices against the Consumer Price Index. She reported that from 1900 through 1980, tooth prices rose steadily in proportion to rates of inflation. In fact, today’s kids are faring quite well compared with past generations of tooth-losers. Generation X youngsters woke up to mere change with the average value of a tooth in 1980 at 66 cents. Baby Boomers were lucky to see even a quarter. The official tooth fairy poll reports that \$1 is the most common price tag today on a lost baby tooth, but it appears that the tooth fairy isn’t terribly consistent. She leaves a mere nickel for some children while splurging on others with a \$50 reward per tooth. So the next time a gap-toothed patient complains about the amount of money left under her pillow, you can remind her of just how good kids have it these days!