

Smile! Pass It On!



Lori Ann Safar, DDS

Healthy reminders to maintain your best smile

Fall 2009



Your Dental Insurance

Get the most

The signs of fall signal back-to-work and back-to-school for many of us. They should also be a cue to make a dental appointment because your dental insurance has seasons too. More than 90% of dental plans are based on a calendar year. If you do not use the benefits you are entitled to, they are gone as of December 31st. Your benefits are not carried forward into the next year.

If you are thinking about getting some dental care sometime this year, now's the time. Many treatments can take weeks to complete once treatment options are sorted out and insurance considerations are resolved. That's why it's especially important to come in for a visit to get things on the go as soon as possible, **before** this year's dental insurance expires. So give us a call!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lori Ann Safar".

Lori Ann Safar, DDS

Smile Strategies

Q & A for a radiant smile



What can I do if my teeth are worn, chipped, or cracked?

You can recapture your confident smile with translucent laminates or veneers that cover flaws but reflect light like natural tooth enamel. They are custom-made and micro-thin to look like the true you. Modern bonding materials and non-metallic crowns can also safely camouflage flaws while actually strengthening your teeth.

What can I do if my teeth are stained or discolored? You can easily brighten up your smile with safe, supervised tooth whitening. It's simple, quick, and affordable, and can help to lighten teeth that are stained from coffee, tobacco, wine, ageing, or medication.

What can I do with old fillings that look unattractive? Your smile can

look fresh and appealing again! Modern, natural-looking filling materials can look just like – or even better than – your own teeth because porcelain, ceramic, or resins are metal-free.

What can I do if I have missing teeth? You can eradicate embarrassing gaps in your smile with natural-looking bridges that span the spaces left by missing teeth, or with another exciting option – dental implants!

What can I do if I have a gummy smile or if my gums are uneven? You can transform the appearance of too small teeth or an uneven gumline into a beautifully balanced, self-confident smile. We simply re-sculpt your gumline.

Call us. We'll be happy to discuss the best smile strategy for you.

The Long And Short

... On teeth

Have you ever wondered why teeth look like they are getting longer as people grow older? What you're seeing is actually an illusion. Teeth aren't growing ... the gums are actually shrinking. As gums recede, they expose more and more tooth – a symptom of gum disease.

Gum disease is very common in mature smiles. It's caused by too much bacteria building up in the mouth. The resulting plaque and tartar irritate gums, making them red and swollen. Pockets form under the gums, and they pull back from the tooth. Without treatment, more and more tooth is exposed, and the underlying bone becomes so weak that the tooth loosens and falls out. The good news? Gum disease can usually be prevented and often reversed with professional cleaning, treatment, and home care.



Not Worth The Gamble

The dangers of dental disease

Many of our patients are diligent about their dental care but there are still some who steer clear of our practice until it really hurts. They skip cleaning appointments and checkups thinking, somehow, they are immune to dental diseases – until they have one. The fact is, without regular, professional, preventive care, dental disease is almost inevitable. Treating these diseases is always more complex and costly than preventing them. You may think you're saving by missing a few appointments, but odds are you'll pay a lot more later.

Studies show that despite years of dental health education, millions of people simply don't show up for needed cleaning or treatment. This translates into millions of lost workdays as these people take time off for more extensive dental treatments when things get critical.

Teenagers are notorious for neglecting their teeth. More than 80% of 16-year-olds have active tooth decay. Here's another alarming statistic – this year, thousands of people will contract oral cancer, a disease for which we routinely screen during each checkup.

It's just common sense! Nearly all major dental problems start as minor tooth trouble. It's only through regular dental checkups that we can detect and treat minor problems early, before they turn into serious dental disease. With dental health, a little prevention goes a long way in keeping your smile healthy. Don't gamble on your dental health – it doesn't pay!



Tell Us...

What do you think?

When it comes to oral health, your teeth can tell us a lot about what's right and what wants more attention. But patient needs often have to do with matters that we can't detect on radiographs or during examinations.

Your visit starts the moment you walk in the door, so it matters to us that you feel welcome and that you are happy with our care. What do you think about our staff, office environment, treatment, pricing, educational information, referrals, and scheduling? What would you like us to change?

We're constantly trying to upgrade care and improve our services. Please let us know how we are doing. Next time you come in for a checkup and we ask you to open wide ... tell us what you think. When it comes to your mouth, we're all ears!



Crown And Bridge

Restoring your smile to its natural beauty

Each of our 32 natural teeth was designed and positioned to share the task of chewing and smiling with incredible beauty and efficiency. Crowns and bridges were developed to restore badly damaged or missing teeth to their natural beauty and performance.

A crown is sometimes called a cap. It's usually made of gold, porcelain or special plastic material. We prepare the tooth for an impression and plaster model so our dental laboratory can craft a custom-fitted crown that looks and functions like your real tooth. Once we permanently cement the new crown into place, your smile will look, feel and work exactly as nature designed it to.

A bridge is a combination of crowns

and artificial teeth. Bridges can close the gap left by one or more missing teeth, restoring the look of your smile and redistributing the workload more evenly. Some bridges are temporary and removable; others are permanently bonded to your healthy teeth. In some cases we might suggest an artificial tooth implanted right into your jawbone.

Sometimes we can use crowns and bridges to prevent damage along with more extensive and costly dental work. For example, if we wait until a large filling falls apart, we risk weakening the nerve of the tooth or fracturing the root. Early, preventive treatment on a *high-risk* tooth not only saves time and money, but it may also save your tooth.



Fluoride Facts

Nature's way to fight tooth decay

Many people think of fluoride as something you get at the dental practice, but fluoride can also be found naturally in most streams and ground water. More than fifty years ago, scientists discovered that people who drink water containing fluoride have far fewer cavities. The reason is simple: the fluoride becomes part of the tooth enamel as it forms during childhood and helps make the tooth stronger and more resistant to tooth decay. No matter how old you are, regular fluoride treatments in our operatories strengthen your teeth's armor against harmful plaque and bacteria.

Today, most major cities have tapped into the benefit of fluoridation by adding it to drinking water. Fluoride is also an ingredient of many brands of toothpaste and mouthwash. You can even find it in beer, soda pop, tea, canned goods, and fresh produce.

There is some concern that there are too many sources of fluoride and that too much could be harmful. Some limited studies have shown that in rare cases too much fluoride can lead to a discoloration of the teeth known as mottling. However, there is no evidence that excess fluoride is causing any general health problems.

If you have any questions about fluoride, ask us! Coupled with regular brushing and healthy eating, fluoride is the easiest and cheapest way to prevent expensive dental problems.

Goodbye Cavities!

Hello cavity prevention...



Everyone is susceptible to cavities, but they can be prevented with a diligent home care regimen that includes brushing, flossing, and rinsing.

What are cavities? When the food we eat interacts with bacteria in our mouths, the result is a chemical reaction which produces an acid. This acid can erode the enamel (outside covering) of a tooth. Eventually, a small hole will form in the tooth's surface. This is a cavity, and it's an open door to infection and decay.

Root Cavity – As adults, root cavities are a concern. This is when the cavity appears not in the crown of the tooth, but on the root. Years of gum

erosion from brushing too hard, as well as from the natural effects of ageing, causes gums to recede, making the root vulnerable to acid attacks.

Filling Cavity – A filling cavity forms adjacent to the edge of a filling or in the part of a tooth that has been exposed by a broken filling.

How can you prevent cavities? The best way to prevent cavities is to take good care of your teeth at home and see us regularly. We can monitor potential problem areas and catch small cavities before they grow larger. At home, you should brush and floss effectively, eat a balanced diet, and use fluoride toothpaste.

Office Information

Lori Ann Safar, DDS

12750 Carmel Country Road
Suite 200
San Diego, CA 92130-2171

Contact

Tel (858) 481-8688
Fax (858) 481-9442
Email lori@loriannsafardds.com
Web site www.loriannsafardds.com

Hours

Mon-Wed 8:00 am – 5:00 pm
Thu 7:00 am – 3:00 pm
Fri closed

Staff

Denise Office Manager
Barbie Registered Dental Assistant
Irene, Amy Dental Hygienists

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Find Out Who Is In The Sea!

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