



# New Year's Greetings Quarterly Member Newsletter

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## ESSENTIAL CARE

### Proper Brushing

- 1. For thorough but gentle cleaning, use a soft toothbrush.**
- 2. Hold your brush at a 45° angle. Begin by brushing the outside of the front teeth. Use gentle, half tooth wide, back and forth strokes.**
- 3. Next, brush the outside back teeth, starting along the gumline.**
- 4. Inside back teeth. Use short, angled brush strokes.**
- 5. Inside front teeth. Tilt the brush vertically, use an up-and-down motion.**
- 6. Chewing surfaces. Hold the brush flat. Use a gentle motion.**

### Proper Flossing

- 1. Wind 18" of floss around your two middle fingers.**
- 2. Gently guide the floss between teeth.**
- 3. To remove plaque and debris, gently move the floss up and down against the tooth.**
- 4. As you move from tooth to tooth, use a fresh section of floss each time.**

## Preventive Health Care

Liberty Dental Plan wishes you a Prosperous 2003. May you accomplish your New Year's resolutions.

Dental health begins with good oral hygiene. This requires professional care and guidance provided by your dentist and dental hygienist, combined with proper care performed by you. That's a partnership. When you follow a recommended home care routine and have regular professional care, you will be able to maintain healthier teeth and gums, and help prevent small problems from becoming bigger ones.

Why do you need a prophylaxis and what it does that you can't do for yourself? A prophylaxis (professional cleaning) is a scaling and polishing procedure performed to remove normal plaque, calculus (tartar) and stains from the teeth. While the main objective of the

prophylaxis is to help prevent gum disease, it can also improve the appearance of your teeth by making them look clean and bright. Scaling is performed using instruments to remove calculus from the teeth. Calculus (tartar) forms when minerals deposit in plaque which is not removed by regular brushing and flossing. This crusty deposit creates a cohesive bond that can only be removed by a dentist or hygienist. Plaque is constantly forming on teeth even after brushing which is why it is so important to brush twice a day and floss daily.

Polishing with a special paste by means of a motorized instrument removes remaining plaque and surface stains caused by various foods, beverages and tobacco. Polished tooth surfaces make it more difficult for plaque and debris to accumulate.

You can help improve your oral hygiene by making plaque and calculus control part of your daily routine. Proper brushing helps remove plaque from the outer, inner, and chewing surfaces of your teeth. Flossing thoroughly helps remove plaque and debris from between the teeth, especially in hard-to-reach areas and slightly under the gumline.

The cleaning may be done by your dentist or dental hygienist, a licensed professional who performs prophylaxis in the dental office and provides education in proper care of the teeth and gums.

We appreciate your continued participation with our plan and wish you the best throughout 2003.



## Dental Director News

### **As a patient: Your concerns about silver fillings!**

Science has shown that amalgams (silver fillings) are safe and effective. The American Dental Association quotes from the scientific studies that they support the continued use of silver fillings. Silver fillings only rarely cause problems, and then only in people with mercury allergies.

There are many types of filling

materials such as resins, porcelain, noble metals and, of course, silver. Silver is the basic filling material for dentistry and the least expensive.

The mercury is mixed with silver, tin and copper metals to which it bonds chemically to form a safe filling material.

R. Bartz, MD, DDS and president of the National Council Against Health Fraud uses the analogy comparing water, a chemical

combination of hydrogen, a gas that can explode, and oxygen, which supports combustion. Therefore, stating that silver fillings will poison you is like saying drinking water will cause you to explode and be turned into flames. Remember, amalgam fillings are only one of many materials available to you through your primary care dentist.

**Richard Hague, DMD**