

Back-to-School Check Up

Date

Parent's Name

Street Address

City, State Zip

Dear *Parent of a Young Patient*:

Summer is over and it's back-to-school time, which means it's also time for *child's name* dental check-up. We want to make sure *he/she* kicks off the school year with excellent dental health!

Please call our office at *number* to schedule an appointment as soon as possible. Our back-to-school schedule fills up quickly, and we want to arrange a time that works best for you.

As the school year begins, we want to remind you of the importance of packing healthy snacks and meals in your child's lunch bag. As you may know, many schools offer sugary snacks or beverages for purchase in the school cafeteria or at vending machines, and this easy access to sugar can lead to tooth decay. There is a strong link between diet and dental health, and a combination of balanced nutrition and regular dental visits will help preserve *child's name's* smile for a lifetime.

We look forward to seeing you and *child's name* soon for *his/her* dental check-up. As always, it's our pleasure to provide you and your family with the very best in dental care!

Sincerely,

Dentist

The Importance of Regular Dental Checkups

Date

Patient

Street Address

City, State Zip

Dear Patient:

We understand that day-to-day life can be incredibly hectic! Between work, family and social commitments, it's tough to make that extra effort to care for yourself and your health. At *name of practice*, we want to make your regular dental check-up a relaxing and positive experience.

While they may seem like a chore, regular dental check-ups are very important to your overall health. Some diseases or medical conditions have warning signs that can appear in the mouth. Diabetes, oral cancer, nutritional and vitamin deficiencies and hormonal irregularities are some examples. By identifying changes in your mouth, we can help detect health problems at a stage when they can be treated most successfully.

Consistent dental visits can also help to detect periodontal (gum) disease. You may be unaware that you have gum disease because it doesn't always hurt. Besides affecting the tissues and bones that support teeth, research suggests that there may be a link between periodontal diseases and other health concerns such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, stroke, bacterial pneumonia and increased risk during pregnancy.

We can check the health of your gums and ensure that all is well. Regular dental visits are also important for denture wearers to ensure a proper fit. In addition, we can detect tooth decay early, which can save time, money and your teeth!

And finally, even if you thoroughly brush and clean between your teeth each day, your teeth need professional cleanings at the dental office. Professional cleaning helps remove stains, plaque and tartar from your teeth, helps prevent gum disease and keeps your smile looking great.

We want your experience at *name of practice* to be as pleasant as possible. Please give us a call at *office number* to schedule your examination and cleaning appointment. We look forward to seeing you soon!

Sincerely,

Dentist

Mouthguards (1)

Date

Patient

Street Address

City, State Zip

Dear *Adolescent Patient*:

How do you think you'd look without teeth (or even with one front tooth missing)? As a dentist who treats many athletic patients, I want to tell you about mouthguards. The mouthguard is an important piece of safety equipment. Mouthguards cushion blows that would otherwise cause broken teeth, injuries to the lips and face, and sometimes, even jaw fractures.

Don't assume that mouthguards are just for typical jocks. Any adult or child involved in a recreational activity that may cause injury to the mouth (such as rollerblading or skateboarding) should protect his or her smile with a mouthguard.

We can create a special mouthguard just for you – one that will provide comfort and a proper fit. This mouthguard will be designed and constructed in our dental office or dental lab. Although custom-made mouthguards may be more expensive than standard mouthguards purchased in stores, you'll find that their exceptionally good fit, comfort and overall quality make them worth it. A custom-made mouthguard stays in your mouth and causes minimal interference with speech.

If you'd like to learn more about mouthguards, please call our office at *office number* or ask me about fitting you for one at your next appointment. As always, we want the best for our patients and look forward to giving you the preventive care you deserve!

Sincerely,

Dentist

Mouthguards (2)

Date

Parent's Name

Street Address

City, State Zip

Dear *Parent of an Adolescent Patient*:

Do you spend your weekends driving your family to and from sports lessons or tournaments? If you've got an active child or teen, we wanted to let you know about the importance of mouthguards to protect their developing smiles.

Or

I know that *name of child* is involved in *name of sport*, so I wanted to be sure that you knew how best to protect *his/her* smile during these fun activities.

The mouthguard is a safety device that can help *name of child* protect *his/her* teeth during sports or recreational activities. The mouthguard cushions blows that would otherwise break teeth, injure the lips and face, and sometimes even fracture the jaw.

We can create a special mouthguard for *name of child*—one that will provide comfort and proper fit. This device will be designed and constructed in our dental office. Although custom-made mouthguards may be more expensive than standard mouthguards purchased in stores, you'll find that their exceptional fit, comfort and overall quality make them worth it. A custom-made mouthguard stays in the mouth and causes minimal interference with speech.

The sooner we fit a mouthguard, the safer *name of child's* smile will be. Our goal is to provide the best quality preventive dental care for your family, so please call our office at *office number* to set up an appointment. Take care!

Sincerely,

Dentist

Sealants

Date

Parents' Names

Street Address

City, State Zip

Dear *Parents of Young Children*:

Did you know that there's a way to help prevent tooth decay that's easy and affordable? We know that *name of child(ren)* or your children's dental health is a high priority in your family, and we wanted to let you know about *sealants*, which are a fantastic weapon against cavities.

A sealant is a clear or white material that is applied to the chewing surfaces of the back teeth where decay occurs most often. The sealant acts as a barrier that keeps out plaque and food and decreases the risk of tooth decay. Sealants are easy to apply; each tooth requires only a few minutes for application.

What's more, sealants are very cost-effective. Properly applied and maintained sealants are extremely effective in preventing pit and fissure decay. So you'll save both dollars and your children's discomfort by applying sealants rather than allowing cavities to develop.

Please call our office today if you'd like to learn more about how sealants can help protect *name of child(ren)* against tooth decay. We want to provide you with the very best in preventive care for your family, so please contact us at *office number* to schedule an appointment.

Sincerely,

Dentist

Braces for Kids

Date

Parents' Names

Street Address

City, State Zip

Dear *Parents of Child Patient*:

Most people still associate having braces with being a teenager, but you may be noticing more and more children between the ages of nine and fourteen with orthodontia. That's because we've found that orthodontic treatment that is begun while your child is still growing may produce the best results.

I'd like to invite you to bring *child's name* in for an orthodontic evaluation now or when *he/she* turns seven. This is the optimal time to review *his/her* mix of adult and baby teeth so I can spot any problems with emerging teeth and jaw growth.

Why should you be concerned about your child having braces? The benefits are endless, and can be very important both physically and emotionally. Physically, crooked and crowded teeth are hard to take care of and clean, which may lead to tooth decay, gum disease, and possibly tooth loss. Bad bites can also cause difficulty in speaking and chewing, abnormal wear on tooth surfaces, and can lead to problems with bones, joints and gum tissue.

Emotionally, crooked teeth can also affect *child name's* self-esteem. *He/she* could grow up feeling bad about *his/her* smile and hide behind frowns or clenched lips. If you correct *child name's* smile, you can give *him/her* a boost of confidence!

Today's braces can be as unnoticeable—or noticeable—as you and your child want them to be. The brackets—part of the braces that attach to each tooth—are smaller now and can sometimes be attached to the back surface of the tooth. They can be clear, tooth-colored, or come in a variety of fun shapes and sizes. In some cases, treatment may be done without using braces at all—by using a series of clear plastic, removable mouthpiece-like aligners.

After we evaluate *child's name*, I'll let you know if I feel it is necessary to refer *him/her* to an orthodontist or if I can treat *him/her* myself. Orthodontic treatment today is more affordable than ever, and you can talk to your orthodontist about payment plans that work within your family's budget.

Please contact our office today at *office number* to arrange an orthodontic evaluation for *child's name*. It will be one of the most important things you can do for *his or her* future!

Sincerely,

Dentist

Dental Care for Babies

Date

Patient

Street Address

City, State Zip

Dear *Patient*:

Being a parent and worrying about your child is a full-time job! As your family dentist, it's *my* job to send preventive dental care reminders about how to care for your *baby's/toddler's* developing teeth and gums.

Below are some tips on good oral care for your child from the American Dental Association, plus the scoop on thumbsucking and teething. Post these on your refrigerator or in a handy place so your family and babysitters can also see them.

- Never allow a baby or toddler to fall asleep with a bottle that contains milk, formula, fruit juices, sweetened liquids or a pacifier dipped in sugar or honey.
- Even diluted sweet drinks can be damaging. Infants should finish their bedtime or naptime bottle (or breastfeeding) before going to bed.
- Wipe the baby's gums with a wet gauze pad or with a washcloth or towel after each feeding.
- Begin brushing your child's teeth with water as soon as the first tooth appears.
- To reduce the chances of tooth decay, children should be encouraged to drink from a cup by their first birthday.
- Your child's first dental visit should occur within six months of the eruption of the first tooth and no later than the baby's first birthday.
- Aggressive thumbsucking may cause problems with children's primary (baby) teeth, so please mention to me on your next visit if your child has this habit. I can check his or her mouth for any changes and give you techniques to help curb thumbsucking.
- As baby teeth erupt, your child may become fussy, sleepless or irritable. One way to comfort your baby is to gently massage the gums with a clean finger, a small, cool spoon or a clean, wet gauze pad, washcloth or towel.

As always, we are here to answer your questions, so please feel free to call our office at *office number* to schedule your first "well-baby" dental check-up.

Sincerely,
Dentist

Dangers of Oral Piercing

Date

Patient

Street Address

City, State Zip

Dear *Teenage Patient*:

I'm sure either you or your friends have considered (or may already have) mouth jewelry or other piercings. You may think it looks cool, but it's my job as your family dentist to alert you to the shocking side effects of this trend.

Here's what can happen if you go ahead with a piercing:

- Your mouth contains millions of bacteria, and infection is a common complication in oral piercings.
- Pain and swelling are other side effects of piercings. Your tongue—the most popular piercing site in the mouth—could swell large enough to choke off your airway!
- Piercing can cause uncontrollable bleeding and nerve damage as well.
- You can easily choke on any studs, barbells, or hoops that come loose in your mouth.
- Chipped or cracked teeth can develop from contact with the jewelry, not to mention that the bacteria breeding around your piercing can cause bad breath!

You may think none of these things will happen to you, but piercing is a fashion statement that involves more than just deciding on your jewelry style or placement. Piercing could have major consequences on your oral health, so keep that in mind when considering following the trends.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at *office number* or we can check your mouth the next time you come in if you have concerns. Thank you for being one of our valued patients!

Sincerely,

Dentist

Healthy Mouth, Healthy Body

Date

Patient

Street Address

City, State Zip

Dear *Patient*:

Admit it. When you think of maintaining your health, you rarely think of your teeth and gums as an integral part of the overall equation.

While it may seem secondary, maintaining healthy teeth and gums is important because periodontal (gum) disease has been linked to a host of “systemic” problems. This means periodontal disease can affect the health of your body as a whole because the bacteria from your gums can spread throughout your body, even without dental procedures.

The bacteria and inflammation associated with periodontal disease have been linked to the following health problems:

- Bacterial pneumonia
- Diabetes
- Heart Disease
- Artery blockages
- Stroke
- Low-birth-weight and pre-term babies

As you can see, preventing and controlling periodontal disease is very important. So here’s how you do it:

- Brush your teeth thoroughly twice a day.
- Use an ADA-Accepted toothpaste with fluoride to help prevent decay.
- Clean thoroughly between your teeth daily with floss or another interdental cleaner.
- For extra help controlling plaque, we can discuss the use of an ADA-accepted anti-microbial mouth rinse.
- See me for routine check-ups.

Since many people don’t know that they have periodontal disease, it’s a good idea to make an appointment with my office so I can check your teeth and gums. If you have one of the conditions listed above, or it runs in your family, this is especially important. You can reach me at *office number*.

Again, it is my pleasure to provide you with outstanding preventive dental care!

Sincerely,

Dentist

Heart Conditions and Preventive Antibiotics

Date

Patient

Street Address

City, State Zip

Dear *Patient*:

You may think your heart and your teeth are completely unrelated; however, there is a strong health link between the two. I am writing to let you know about a condition called bacterial endocarditis, which can result from bleeding during regular dental cleanings, dental extractions, periodontal (gum) procedures, dental implant placement and some root canal procedures.

Sometimes during these dental procedures, bacteria from the mouth can enter the bloodstream and work their way to the heart. This presents a risk for some people with cardiac abnormalities because the bacteria may cause bacterial endocarditis, a serious inflammation of the heart valves or tissues. The good news is that *preventive antibiotics* can be used to protect patients who are at risk for developing bacterial endocarditis.

Skim the list below to see if any of these heart conditions apply to you:

- Heart surgery within past six months
- Pacemaker
- Vascular surgery (replaced artery) within past six months
- Artificial heart valve
- History of rheumatic fever
- History of heart murmur
- Previous bacterial endocarditis
- Systemic pulmonary shunt
- Congenital heart defect
- Acquired valvular dysfunction

The American Dental Association and American Heart Association joined together to develop guidelines that recommend the use of antibiotics prior to dental treatment, based on the medical condition and on the treatment to be performed.

If you have any of the conditions above, or if you are taking new or different medicine since your last dental appointment, please let me know as soon as possible. I may need to update your medical records and contact your physician or cardiologist to determine which antibiotics you should take before your next dental visit.

As always, I am here to provide safe, high-quality dental care, so please feel free to contact my office at *office number* to schedule an appointment or to report a change in your health status. Take care!

Sincerely,

Dentist

Artificial Joint Replacement and Preventive Antibiotics

Dear *Patient*:

If you've had joint replacement surgery, it's most likely been a life-enhancing experience! However, you may not know that bacteria commonly found in your mouth may now travel through the bloodstream and settle in your artificial joint. This increases your risk of contracting an infection.

For the first two years following a total joint replacement, antibiotic prophylaxis is recommended before all high-risk dental procedures (those that involve bleeding or producing high levels of bacteria in the blood). This means you will take antibiotics to fight infection before high-risk procedures.

After two years, only high-risk patients may need to receive antibiotics for high-risk procedures. If you have an artificial joint that's two or more years old, please read the following high-risk situations below and see if any apply to you:

- Rheumatoid arthritis, systemic lupus or other medical conditions that cause you to be immunocompromised or immunosuppressed
- Immunosuppression caused by drug or radiation treatment
- Malnourishment
- Hemophilia
- HIV infections
- Insulin dependent

High-risk dental procedures include:

- All dental extractions
- All periodontal (gum) procedures
- Dental implant placement or insertion of teeth that were knocked out
- Some root canal procedures
- Initial placement of orthodontic bands (not brackets)
- Certain specialized local anesthetic injections
- Regular dental cleanings (if bleeding is anticipated)

If you have had a joint replacement, please contact our office at *office number*. I'll need to contact your orthopedic surgeon to develop an appropriate course of treatment for you. As always, it's a pleasure to provide superior dental care to you and your family!

Sincerely,
Dentist

P.S. Please feel free to read the *Journal of the American Dental Association's* article on artificial joint replacement and antibiotics online at www.ada.org/prof/resources/pubs/jada/reports/prophy.asp.

Sipping and Snacking

Date

Patient

Street Address

City, State Zip

Dear *Patient*:

Who has time to eat right? Americans are so busy working long hours and caring for their families that it's tempting to sip soft drinks and snack all day instead of eating healthy, well-rounded meals. However, when convenience replaces good eating habits, your weight and oral health may suffer.

As your dental provider, it's my job to remind you to care for your teeth and gums, not just by practicing good oral hygiene, but also by limiting sugary foods and drinks, including fruit juices and diet colas. When sugar is consumed repeatedly in large amounts, the harmful effects on teeth can be dramatic. Sugar on teeth supplies food for bacteria, which produces acid. The acid in turn can eat away enamel on teeth.

As you may know, foods high in sugar and starch carry an extra risk of tooth decay. If you can, pack fruits and vegetables to snack on throughout the day. Here are some additional tips on how to reduce your risk of tooth decay:

- If you choose to consume sugary foods and drinks, do so with meals
- Limit between-meal snacks
- Drink more water
- Brush your teeth twice daily and floss daily

Remember, without a balanced diet, your body cannot function efficiently, and health problems, including obesity, nutrient deficiencies, and dental caries (cavities) can result.

During your next office visit we can discuss your nutritional habits, so please feel free to contact me at *office number* to set up an appointment. In the meantime, take care of yourself and your health!

Sincerely,

Dentist

Dealing with Dental Anxiety

Date

Patient

Street Address

City, State Zip

Dear *Patient*:

For some people, visiting the dentist can be a stressful experience. It is estimated that 35 million adults experience anxiety at the thought of an upcoming dental visit—and they end up postponing their appointment. At *name of practice*, we want to assure you that we understand this anxiety and we're here to make your visit as pleasant as possible.

Here are a few tips to help you relax before and after a dental treatment:

- Tell your dentist and the dental staff you feel fearful, tense or anxious. Bringing your fears out into the open can help your dentist tailor the treatment and pace to suit your needs.
- Try to schedule your dental visit for a time when you won't be rushed or physically strained. You may find a Saturday or early morning appointment less stressful than rushing to see the dentist directly after work.
- Get a good night's sleep the night before and eat light meals the day of your appointment.
- Wear loose, comfortable clothes to your dental appointment. Avoid wearing tight collars or clothes that will restrict your movement.
- Arrange a signal ahead of time with the dental staff – such as raising your hand – to indicate you are feeling discomfort or need a break from a procedure.
- Bring some CDs to listen to (we provide headphones) during your treatment. Try visualization—focusing on a relaxing scene from a favorite vacation spot and keeping it in your “mind's eye” during the visit.

Please talk to me about medications that are available to help create more relaxed, comfortable dental visits. The type of procedure, your overall health, history of allergies and your anxiety level are considered when determining which approach is best for your particular case.

Again, our number one goal is to provide you with gentle, quality dental care. Please feel free to call us today at *office number* to make an appointment!

Sincerely,
Dentist