

# ◆ The Healthplex Herald ◆

Volume 13 Issue 4

A Newsletter from Healthplex, Inc. "Leadership in Dental Plans"

Summer 2012



## COMMON DRUGS AND THE IMPACT ON ORAL HEALTH

Most patients over the age of 50 are taking at least three prescribed medications as well as a variety of over-the-counter (OTC) supplements. Many of these medications have adverse oral effects of which dentists and their patients should be aware.

Below are the most commonly prescribed medication classes and some of their specific oral impacts:

- **Contraceptives / Hormones:**  
Most women of child-bearing age are using a type of oral contraceptive. The estrogen component can cause nausea, which can be accompanied by acid reflux, leading to acid erosion of the tooth enamel. Oral soft tissue reactions are not uncommon in women taking oral contraceptives. These may range from slight discoloration to inflammation of the gingival tissue.
- **Antilipemics :**  
Patients taking cholesterol lowering medications such as Zocor, Pravachol, Tricor, Lipitor, and Crestor can have side effects that include nausea, vomiting and heartburn.
- **Antiulceratives / OTC medication for gastroesophageal reflux disease:**  
Medications for the treatment of GERD can contribute to acid erosion of the enamel. Kapidex can cause altered taste, xerostomia, and halitosis. Nexium, Prevacid, and Prilosec can cause xerostomia, vomiting, and nausea.
- **Antihistamines and Bronchodilators:**  
Medications such as Claritin, Allegra and Zyrtec can lead to mild to extreme xerostomia. If taken long-term, this class of drugs can contribute to reduced salivary flow.
- **Bisphosphonate and other drugs for osteoporosis:**  
Boniva can cause nausea, vomiting, and GERD, contributing to a higher caries incidence. Bisphosphonates such as Fosamax, Fosamax Plus D, Actonel, Actonel with Calcium, Boniva and Atelvia list a drug alert for atypical fractures of the femur. Bisphosphonates may lead to osteonecrosis, mainly of the mandible.

Getting the entire "picture" of patients' health and drug history is very important for their dental health, overall well-being, and improved patient outcome.

Original content by Pamela J. Myers, RDH

## OFFICE OF THE QUARTER

SPRING VALLEY DENTAL CARE  
ROCKLAND COUNTY, NY

### *Congratulations!*



A special thank you to Spring Valley Dental Care for their ongoing commitment to patient care and service.

This office has proven that they are committed to providing preventive services to their community by increasing member outreach efforts and by volunteering, on a Sunday, at a local community health fair.

Offices chosen are voted upon by the various departments interacting with providers. An office gift and a framed certificate were presented to the office.

## NEW GROUPS

Did you know that Healthplex services over **3.2 million members!** In our ongoing efforts to bring you additional patients, we have added the groups listed below to the Healthplex client list.

**Amida Care**  
**BlueCross BlueShield of Western NY**  
**MetroPlus**  
**Total Care**  
**Village Care MAX**  
**VNSNY Choice Select Health**

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## CREATING A POSITIVE PATIENT EXPERIENCE



Building strong provider-patient relationships is an important and essential part of any dental practice. At Healthplex, we aim for all of our members to have good experiences when going to in-network providers. However, in a recent patient satisfaction survey, poor office interaction was the most commonly cited complaint from patients.

There are certain things that dentists and their dental office staff can do to maintain a high level of patient satisfaction. Providers can share the suggestions listed below with their staff in order to increase patient satisfaction. With guidance and monitoring, these suggestions can be implemented successfully.

First impressions are lasting impressions and are the key to starting a successful provider-patient relationship. These impressions can occur the first time a patient enters your office or even when a patient calls your office. Creating and leaving a positive impression is imperative.

The following suggestions can be shared with your staff:

When a patient visits the office:

- Welcome patients to your practice as they walk through the door. A small gesture, such as a smile, makes patients feel comfortable.
- Keep a clear work space. Clutter can be the sign of a disorganized office.
- If you are occupied and cannot address the patient immediately, do not let them stand at the front desk waiting to be acknowledged. Try using the following phrase, "Thank you for visiting Dr. XXX's office. Please have a seat and make yourself at home. I'll be with you as soon as I complete this task." Continue to check on them until you can attend to them fully.
- Do not try talking to a patient who is checking out while at the same time trying to answer a phone call or answer another patient's question. A patient should have your full attention for those few minutes.

When a patient calls the office:

- Speak clearly when answering the phone. Do not chew gum.
- Identify yourself and the practice name over the phone so that the caller knows they have called the right place.
- If you are occupied and cannot address the caller immediately, go ahead and answer the phone by saying, "Thank you for calling XYZ Dental, can you please hold?". Patients tend to become aggravated when they are placed on hold without being asked. Continue to check on them while on hold until they can be attended to fully.
- Return patient calls in a timely manner. You want your patients to know they are an integral part of your success so give them the attention they need.
- Try to answer the phone before the third ring.
- Do not try to rush the patient off of the phone because another line is ringing or you see another patient is getting ready to check out.
- Avoid calling a patient at home before 8:00 a.m. or after 8:00 p.m.

By implementing these suggestions, dentists and their dental staff, will improve their relationships with patients. The result will be a more successful practice, with patients that are loyal and content.

## DID YOU KNOW?

- 60% of people don't know that a sore jaw, combined with chest pain, can signal a heart attack, especially in women.
- 73% of Americans would rather go grocery shopping than floss.
- A toothpick is the object most often choked on by Americans.
- Dentists recommend that a toothbrush be kept at least six (6) feet away from a toilet to avoid airborne particles resulting from the flush.
- Like fingerprints, everyone's tongue print is different.
- 32% of Americans cite bad breath as the least attractive trait of their co-workers.
- AAP's recent consumer survey found that 80% of people are not happy with their smile.

### HEALTHPLEX CONTACTS



**Credentialing**  
516-542-2212

**Provider Service Unit**  
888-468-2183 (prompt #3)

**Emergency Referrals Unit**  
888-468-2183 (prompt #2)

**Provider Relations**  
888-468-2183 (prompt #4)

**UM Clinical Review**  
888-468-5182

**Internet Support**  
888-468-5171



**Fax Numbers**  
(516 area code)

Claims	542-2614
Credentialing	228-9568
Customer Service	227-1143
Medicaid	228-9576
Provider Relations	228-9571
Referral Authorization	228-5025

### **E-Mail**

ProviderRelations@healthplex.com  
info@healthplex.com

Claims@healthplex.com  
Referrals@healthplex.com

### **Website**

www.healthplex.com

## NEW ROUTE TO CLAIMS SUBMISSION

Providers can now fax and/or email their claims or any claim related information directly to us for more convenient processing.

Claims Fax Number : **516-542-2614**

Email : [Claims@Healthplex.com](mailto:Claims@Healthplex.com)

Please reference the claim number on all submissions.

## X-RAYS AND BRAIN TUMOR RISK



A study, published online April 10, 2012 in the American Cancer Society journal, *Cancer*, has found that people diagnosed with meningioma, the most common type of brain tumor, are more likely to report that they have received certain types of dental x-rays in the past.

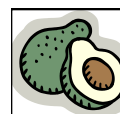
The study reports that ionizing radiation is the major environmental risk factor for meningioma, a tumor that is almost always benign, but which can have debilitating symptoms. Dental x-rays are the most common source of exposure to ionizing radiation in the United States.

The study found at a general level, that people with meningioma were more than twice as likely as people without the brain tumor to have had a bitewing x-ray sometime in their life. The exposure to dental x-rays in the study took place in the 1960s, when dental x-rays delivered higher doses of radiation than they do today.

People who reported having received a panorex exam before they turned 10, or on a yearly or more frequent basis, were more likely to develop meningioma than those who had never had a panorex exam.

*The American Dental Association recommends that dentists be judicious in their use of x-rays. For patients whose teeth are healthy and who are not at increased risk of developing cavities, the ADA suggests children have x-rays about every one to two years, adolescents, every year and a half to three years, and adults, every two to three years.*

## AVOCADOS



Avocados provide healthy fats known as mono-unsaturated fats which are useful in improving the health status of individuals with high cholesterol, diabetes, arthritis, gingivitis, skin disorders and prostate cancer. Especially notable with increasing high cholesterol statistics, the combination of losing weight and eating more avocados provides promising improvement of health status.

### Guacamole:

- 3 avocados (peeled, pitted, and mashed)
- 1 lime, juiced
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup diced onion
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro
- 2 roma (plum) tomatoes, diced
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- 1 pinch ground cayenne pepper (optional)

In a medium bowl, mash together the avocados, lime juice, and salt. Mix in onion, cilantro, tomatoes, and garlic. Stir in cayenne pepper. Refrigerate 1 hour for best flavor, or serve immediately.

# Puzzle of the Quarter

Can you name what I am by solving the cryptogram below?



A	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	L	M	N	O	P	R	S	T	U	W

17 26 7 23 9 7 4 24 11 7 13 13 18 4 7 6 21 11 5 8 2 21 26 2

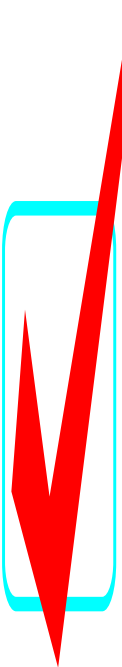
21 15 17 11 11 5 11 1 7 8 17 1 5 6 15 , 22 5 18 15 17 24 11

6 21 24 15 5 15 1 7 15 1 6 5 24 22 1 2 5 24 1 2 5 TEETH  
1 5 5 1 2

Please fax answer to: 516-228-9569

ANSWER: \_\_\_\_\_

# Check This Out



**ELIGIBILITY VERIFICATIONS:** For a quick and easy way to get eligibility for your patients, please use the Healthplex website at [www.Healthplex.com](http://www.Healthplex.com)

**REFERRALS:** Referrals may be faxed to 516-228-5025 or emailed to [Referrals@healthplex.com](mailto:Referrals@healthplex.com).

**ORTHODONTIC SERVICES:** Effective October 1, 2012, all Medicaid managed care plans will be required to cover orthodontic services for eligible enrollees under the age of 21. Orthodontists are encouraged to apply for participation in the Healthplex Medicaid IPA. Please email your request to: [Providerrelations@healthplex.com](mailto:Providerrelations@healthplex.com) or fax to: 516-228-9571.

**GREATER NEW YORK DENTAL MEETING:** Please visit the Healthplex booth at the Greater New York Dental Meeting November 25th through November 28th, 2012 at the Jacob Javits Convention Center, New York City.

**STAY CONNECTED:** Follow Healthplex on **Twitter** and **Facebook**. Click on the links at [www.Healthplex.com](http://www.Healthplex.com).

**PEDO OUTREACH CALLING CAMPAIGN:** Healthplex's Education and Outreach Department has implemented its annual calling campaign where specially-trained Healthplex representatives call members between the ages of 2 and 21 who have not had a dental visit this year. For more information call 516-740-8570.

**DENTAL PRACTICE FOR SALE:** Practice located in Manhattan that has been established for 35 years is for sale. For more information, please call 646-245-4034.

*It is easier to go down a hill than up, but the best view is from the top.*

*Bits & Pieces:*

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