

Just to Let You Know

“Any Change to Medical History?”

It is the question all our patients at the practice are used to hearing.

Medicines and medical problems have several impacts on dental care.

The most obvious ones are the medicines, which thin the blood and make patients bleed more easily. Warfarin is the worst and patients who take this have to have their bleeding time checked regularly. If we need to do an extraction we have to confer with the patient’s doctor first.

However, 75 mg Aspirin (taken by many of the over 50’s) will also prolong bleeding, which means extractions take longer to stop bleeding.

Some medicines make the gums swell and some make the skin inside the mouth sore. Some can cause strange tastes or affect the perception of taste.

Medicines that dry the mouth are a big problem to the dentist. The patients are more vulnerable to tooth decay as well as having discomfort when eating and swallowing. We will discuss the dry mouth in a future newsletter.

We have to be on the alert for drug interactions. Some antibiotics affect the effectiveness of the contraceptive pill. So, ladies, please do not be offended if we enquire about this. We should hate to be responsible for an unwanted pregnancy! We try to prescribe very few medicines in this practice, but will always cross-check patient’s existing prescriptions with anything we wish to prescribe. In the current world of multiple medications this can sometimes take time- so please bear with us.

Patients who take several medications are advised to carry the computer print-out of medications which they can get from the pharmacy and doctor. Not only would it help us but if the patients is taken ill away from home or has an accident then the current medication is there for attendant medical people to see.

There has been an enormous increase in people taking nutritional supplements and herbal medicines. This is a largely unregulated market and often there have been few serious studies into the side effects of the medications. We don’t necessarily know if there are oral side effects but we should know if patients are taking them in case we have a mystery problem.

Medicines for Children should always be sugar free. Repeat prescriptions of antibiotics used to be a common cause of tooth decay. Please make sure the doctor always prescribes Sugar Free (SF).

On this note we have noticed Boots “Gummy Bear”. Multivitamins disguised as gum bears. The number two ingredient is sugar and really we fail to see how these can be justified. They look like sweets, taste like sweets and are sold in small plastic packs of 5 bears as a daily dose.

If children must have vitamin supplements then please ensure that they are sugar free. If you are unsure please contact the practice for advice.

Great ‘A level’ results? Passed the end of years exams?

Another autumn term, another missed dental appointment. Would all students (and the proud owners of students) please try to get check-up appointments at least a week before the date to return to university or college. It can be very frustrating to see someone on a Friday afternoon, find a cavity and hear that they are going back to ‘uni’ the next day.

If we miss you this summer please call well in advance and we can book an appointment for the Xmas holidays.

Poor diet, haphazard tooth cleaning and the stress can all have an impact on oral health. Let us see you regularly.