

Dental X-rays nothing more than 'tooth pictures'

By Dennis Dussman, DMD
WHY DO I NEED AN X-RAY?

I would like to extend on behalf of the staff of the North Slope Borough Dental Clinic, our appreciation for the decrease in broken appointments and your interest in calling in if you cannot make your appointments. This is greatly appreciated so that we can serve others during that time.

Many patients ask me questions concerning dental X-rays. One of the dentist's most important diagnostic aids is the radiograph or more commonly the X-ray. To the children we call them "Tooth Pictures."

The X-ray is produced in a shielded machine and is aimed toward the film, placed either in the mouth or palimpse cassette. The X-rays penetrate muscles, bone, and the teeth in varying degrees. That is why you see shades of black, white and grey. This "picture" shows the dentist what is exactly going on between and within the tooth. The panalipse films show us what is going on within both jaws. The valuable aid can be a lifesaver by allowing the dentist to "see" and diagnose problems within the oral cavity (mouth) and surrounding tissues.

REMEMBER: "The dentist does not take any unnecessary X-rays. Only the ones he needs to properly diagnose and treat the patient."

Fortunately X-rays can be stopped by lead. This is why the dentist "drapes" the patient with an apron before he takes an X-ray. This apron is heavy because it contains a 2mm lead sheet to protect the patient from any unnecessary exposure.

There are certain conditions in which we will not take X-ray films:

- 1) Pregnancy: Within the first three months when your baby is developing. (If in an extreme emergency a

film must be taken, you will be fully draped with a lead apron to protect you and your baby).

- 2) When you are frequently exposed to X-rays through your job or medical treatment.

forehand and you will help us immensely, so we can take precautions.

Bottle mouth

Many people feel that they don't have to take care of "Baby Teeth," because they will only come out anyway. This is a very wrong attitude. Children need their teeth just as adults do. They also are just as susceptible to dental pain as are adults. A child who has pain as a "baby" will have a fear of the dentist for many years to come and have a life of dental problems. In the last issue of the newsletter I explained the need to clean the "baby teeth" and to remove milk or soda from the baby's bottle. This bears repeating, because we have more and more two- and three-year-olds with "Bottle Mouth Caries." This is a traumatic experience for both the child and the parents.

The baby teeth also serve to save the "space" in the mouth for permanent teeth to erupt. Where posterior molars (back teeth) are lost we are condemning our children to space problems that can lead to expensive orthodontics in years to come.

So remember

*Don't let your baby go to sleep nursing a bottle containing juice, milk, soda or Kool-aid. These contain sugar that pool behind and around the teeth causing tooth decay.

*Don't let your child eat candies or suck on hard candy all day. A sweet as a

snack after meals is sufficient. Although the child will be happy for the moment you both will be sorry later.

*Children's teeth need to be cleaned like an adult's. Take a wash cloth or gauze swab and wipe the teeth clean until the child is old enough to "perub" with a toothbrush. It is up to the parent to take care of their teeth

until they can take care of them themselves.

Remember

Let's have a child's first visit to the dentist to be an enjoyable experience.

Flossing Facts

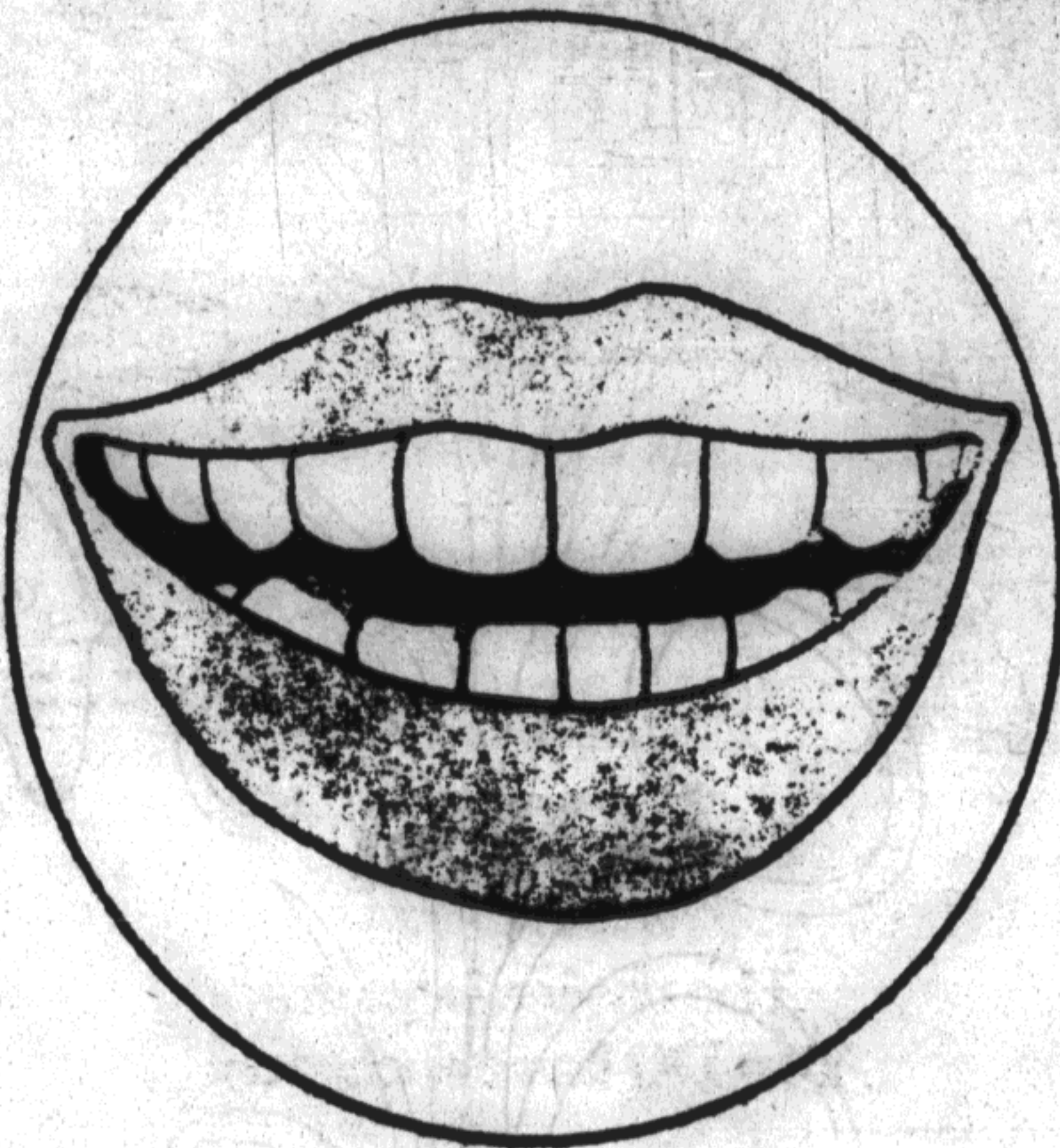
The first question our assistants or hygienist asks is, "are you familiar with dental floss?" She wants to know be-

cause it is a fact that flossing reduces the chance of cavities forming between the teeth.

So, next time you are in to see us ask us for some floss and some free instruction on how you can prevent cavities between your teeth.

Remember

There is nothing the dentist can do that will overcome what the patient will not do...



Brush and floss daily.

WANTED FOR STEALING

"SUGAR BOWL" PETE

Hair:	white bread	Nails:	soft	Start ring:	doughnut
Eyebrows:	chewing gum	Mouth:	ph	Gums:	soda pop gum
Eyes:	gum drops	Clothes:	candy stick	Shoes:	cookies

Who is "Sugar Bowl" Pete? Why is he your enemy? Look carefully... the things you see in his picture rob you of beautiful, healthy teeth. They are thieves. They kill your smile... destroy your teeth... steal your health. Don't let "Sugar Bowl" Pete do that to YOU! Join the SHERIFF'S POSSE and help capture "Sugar Bowl" by remembering - "Sweets" harm your teeth!

