

# Springtime

*Regular Exams are Important!*

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### **Regular Exams Are Important**

Because we are committed to preventing dental problems before they happen, we recommend that all of our patients see us at least every six months for a routine cleaning and examination. Dental problems usually start out small but can quickly worsen to become much more serious. These problems are much easier to treat—or better yet avoid—if they are caught early.

### **Serious dental problems begin as treatable problems**

One example of this is gingivitis. The effects of gingivitis are reversible. But when gingivitis advances into periodontal disease, the bone loss that can result is not reversible.

Another example is a small cavity on the surface of a tooth. This can easily be fixed, but if it spreads to the inner layers of the tooth, we may need to perform root canal therapy and restore the tooth with a crown. This can also be the case with a cracked filling. It can usually be fixed quite easily. If untreated, it may lead to an infection in the tooth's inner pulp layer that also must be treated through root canal therapy.

A bad bite can also contribute to problems with your temporomandibular joint (TMJ) and can cause the painful cycle of muscle spasms and other jaw-joint problems commonly known as TMD, or temporomandibular disorder. There are ways to treat TMD and the sooner treatment begins the sooner the painful symptoms can be relieved.

The problems mentioned above are just a few of the many avoidable or treatable problems that, if left untreated, can quickly become much worse.

### **The key to avoiding serious dental problems—Regular checkups**

During your regular checkups we examine the health of your mouth, measure the bone levels around your teeth, check for decay, screen for oral cancer, examine your dental work, evaluate your bite, and remove plaque and tartar from your



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teeth. The bacteria that cause periodontal disease thrive in plaque and tartar, producing toxins that can cause bone loss and eventually tooth loss. A toothbrush and floss are almost useless against tartar, so to keep it from building up we must remove it every three to six months in our office.

Your six month exam and cleaning is a critical part of a preventive strategy. It is the best way for you to prevent advanced dental problems, and minimize the time and money you spend in the dental chair.

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