



Steven T. Kuhn, D.D.S. Ltd

Dentistry for Children and Adolescents

# Smile Highlights



Produced for Patients of Dr. Steven T. Kuhn, Dr. Dennis R. LaMonte and Dr. Niki Kasper

Summer 2009

## In The Spotlight



Meet our fabulous Dental Hygienists!

Cheryl, Jackie and Laura

*Cheryl* graduated from Prairie State College in 1992 and has been a Dental Hygienist for over 17 years. She proudly joined our team in June of 2004.

Cheryl is blessed with three beautiful girls, Allison, Mallory, and Lindsay. She loves being a Mom, treasures her family and friends and spends her spare time reading and working out. "I consider it a privilege to work with children. They make my job as a hygienist rewarding, fulfilling and fun. To be a part of a child's day always makes my day," shares Cheryl.

*Jackie* received her degree as a Registered Dental Hygienist from Prairie State College and joined our team in July of 2007. Jackie is from Orland Park, Illinois. In her spare time she likes to shop with her mother and sisters. Jackie also enjoys spending time with her boyfriend Brendan and especially all of her cute little nieces and nephews. Jackie adds, "Working with children allows me to stay young and gives me an excuse to be silly and goofy. Kids say the cutest things; they always put a smile on my face."

*Laura* graduated from Prairie State College and became a Registered Dental Hygienist in 2004. She joined Dr. Steve's team in April 2007. Laura married her high school sweetheart, Dave, and has 3 beautiful children, Kristen, Lindsey and David. They have lived in New Lenox since 1989. Laura likes to make jewelry, crochet and read in her spare time. Laura believes, "If you ever want to remember the child within yourself, hang out with a child. They are fun, entertaining and can make you smile even on the most challenging days. The best is when you're able to make a connection with that frightened or uncertain child. Their eyes smile and a bond is formed. On the greatest of days this new friendship ends with a hug!"

## Meet Our Sea Cucumber!

As you wait for your next visit with Dr. Steve, Dr. Dennis, or Dr. Niki, we hope that you peer into the homes of our fish friends. In doing so, you may observe a long, black sausage-shaped cylinder which looks like a black cucumber with warty bumps. He looks slimy and is also tough like leather.

Our "Sea Cucumber," as he has become affectingly known, may be at one side of the tank when you first see him. However, after your cleaning or dental work, our friend may have slowly made his way across the bottom of the tank feeding on tiny particles and algae by brushing his tentacles across the aquarium floor. Sometimes he may even extend his tentacles to trap his food directly.

Our Sea Cucumber was donated to Dr. Steve and he



happily moved into the tank at our office. The Sea Cucumber has a large family and it is not known whether his mom and dad came from the deepest or shallowest of oceans, or even from the hottest or coldest! All we know is that he greatly enjoys spending time with his friends in the tank.

In the ocean, he has to watch out for predators such as crabs, lobsters, some starfish and fish, but not in our tank. If he feels threatened he emits large amounts of sticky strings that surround and trap his predator long enough for him to escape. Typically, he prefers moving during the nighttime hours when all is dark in the office. However, he realizes that doesn't give him much of a chance to say "Hello" to you, so keep a close eye on him. He is very sneaky!

Thank you for all your referrals. We appreciate them!

# Insurance Today

Every day we are asked questions concerning dental insurance. Like most consumers nowadays, you need to know how much is covered and what your out of pocket expense will be. As a courtesy to all of our families, we take a lot of time and care in verifying insurance plans and coordinating benefits. We'd like to answer each and every question, but the variables are endless! Each employer negotiates dental plans with their own insurance company, resulting in hundreds of different dental plans. In addition, many

plans make changes to the existing covered benefits, making it even harder for policy holders and dental offices to keep track.

For routine dental care such as examinations, x-rays and cleanings, your insurance company most likely has restrictions as to how often these services will be paid by the plan. Our office follows the recommendations outlined by the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry and the American Dental Association. We schedule appointments based on the needs of our patients, so it is important for you to become familiar with your plan prior to scheduling each appointment.

*While a predetermination is never a guarantee of payment, it is the best way to clarify what your*

insurance company is likely to cover, even before any dental work is started. When treatment is proposed during an examination, a treatment plan is prepared by our office and forwarded to your insurance company. In turn, they will give you an estimation of what their financial support will be through a letter of authorization.

Dental insurance is a contract between you, your insurance company and your employer. The amount of benefits you are entitled to is related to the plan your employer has purchased and not related to the value of the dental services received. When you take an active role in understanding your insurance coverage, we can work together to optimize your insurance benefits and lower your out of pocket expenses.

## For your information...

Our web site not only contains information about pediatric dentistry, but also has many articles related to adult dentistry and oral health. Just log on to [www.drstevekuhn.com](http://www.drstevekuhn.com) and click on "More Info". This will take you to a wide variety of topics such as dental implants, teeth whitening and cosmetic dentistry. Always contact your dental care provider with any questions or concerns.



If there is a topic you would like to know more about, we will be happy to include it in our newsletter. Just call our office or email your ideas to [Imdrsteve@comcast.net](mailto:Imdrsteve@comcast.net).

## Why Does My Child Have Such Bad Breath?

Bad breath, or halitosis, is as common in children as it is with adults. Halitosis is an offensive odor which comes from the mouth, nose or airway. In children, it can be a symptom of various conditions including postnasal drip, sinusitis, dry mouth and dental problems. Certain medical conditions and medications can also contribute to halitosis.

Postnasal drip is the most common cause of halitosis in children. Secretions from a runny nose, allergies or a sinus infection drip down the back of the throat and onto the tongue. During the night, these secretions accumulate increasing the odor causing bacteria that causes bad breath or "morning breath." Have your child rinse his mouth thoroughly with water as soon as he awakes. Then, give him a healthy breakfast followed by brushing and flossing. A soft-bristled tooth brush can also be used to gently clean the tongue surface.

Dry mouth is also a very common cause of bad breath in children. Many children breathe through their mouth during the day or sleep with their mouth open at night decreasing the amount of saliva in the mouth. Certain medications like antihistamines and bronchodilators can also dry out the mouth. Saliva is very important because it is nature's way of cleansing the mouth and teeth of the microorganisms that cause bad breath. Dehydration causes a decrease in saliva, so make sure your child drinks plenty of water and sugar free fluids throughout the day. Children should always avoid common mouth rinses that contain alcohol; they will cause the oral tissues to become dry.

Sometimes, a dental condition such as an abscessed tooth or decay can cause bad breath. An infection with an abscessed tooth has an odor all of its own. Teeth that have decay or faulty restorations are likely to get food debris stuck between them or in the decayed crevices of the tooth causing bacteria to accumulate which causes a foul odor.

*Remember, to keep bad breath at bay, have your child rinse his mouth often with water, brush and floss regularly, drink plenty of fluids, eat healthy meals, avoid mouthwashes containing alcohol and visit the dentist and physician regularly.*



# invisalign® Special Event!

We are pleased to announce that Dr. Niki Kasper is certified in Invisalign®, one of the most advanced components of adult cosmetics.

## What is Invisalign?

It's a proven method for straightening teeth using a series of custom-made, nearly undetectable aligners.

## How does Invisalign work?

Each aligner is precisely calibrated and manufactured to custom-fit over your teeth and gently move them through every stage of your treatment.

There are no metal wires and brackets, and you can still enjoy your favorite foods, and brush and floss easily.

## Can I benefit?

Adults account for nearly 25% of all orthodontic patients! The most common problems are crowded teeth, teeth spaced too far apart, protruding upper or lower teeth, and upper and lower front teeth that do not touch.

## How do I get started?

After consultation and deciding on a treatment plan, we take an impression of your teeth, and submit it to Invisalign. Using the latest 3-D computer technology, our instructions are translated into a series of medical-grade plastic aligners. You can view your own virtual treatment plan when you start, so you can see how great your straight teeth will look!

We know you'll be inspired to consider Invisalign! Please call us for a consultation.



Is Invisalign Right For You?

Join us & find out!

Saturday,  
October 3rd, 2009

Those patients who attend this Special Event, and are eligible for Invisalign, will receive:

- Complimentary Consultation (\$100 value)
- Free professional tooth whitening with your treatment (\$550 value)

Patients who commit to treatment during this special event will receive 10% off!

\*must be 18 years or older



Space is limited, so please call our office at (815) 806-1600 to reserve your appointment time!

# Early Orthodontic Treatment

How soon do children get braces? It's a common question. In recent years, the dental profession has realized that many bite problems can be recognized and treated much earlier than was once thought. Much of the expensive and lengthy orthodontic treatment in teen years can be avoided by taking early preventive steps when the child is younger. The American Association of Orthodontists suggests that all children have an orthodontic evaluation before the age of seven, while the bones are still growing and before problems develop.

Phase One or Interceptive Orthodontic Treatment is provided during the growing stage before all of the permanent teeth are in place. An orthodontist can successfully modify the jaw to create enough space for the adult teeth thus minimizing the need for any extractions. Growth modification is necessary when a child is developing an abnormal bite or to correct the positioning of the jaw. Phase one orthodontic treatment will allow normal growth patterns and enable the development of healthy facial anatomy crucial for normal function of chewing, speech, TMJ movement and even breathing.

Space maintainers are a form of early orthodontic treatment commonly used when a child loses a primary or baby tooth prematurely. Suppose your child loses a primary tooth early. If that space isn't maintained, teeth on either side will begin to tip over into the space. This tipping can cause the permanent tooth to get impacted or stuck within the jaw. A temporary space maintainer will hold the space open until the permanent tooth is ready to grow into the proper position.

Early orthodontics can also be an effective way to deal with bad habits that can deform your child's bite. Habits such as tongue thrusting and thumb sucking can lead to problems even before the permanent teeth come in. Early treatment can prevent these habits from causing complex bite problems later on.

Treatment with braces or Phase Two Orthodontic Treatment may still be necessary when all the permanent teeth erupt. However, the length of time the child is in braces may be significantly reduced.

No matter how old you are, orthodontic treatment isn't just a way to improve appearance. It can also prevent problems and help teeth find optimum form and function. Dr. Steve and Dr. Dennis routinely evaluate your child for orthodontic conditions through examinations and panoramic x-rays and will refer your child to an orthodontist if necessary. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns about your child's orthodontic status.

## Referrals Do Us Proud...

### Every time!

We take great pride in a team that always offers friendly and fun pediatric dentistry and it is with great pleasure that we have extended our friendly services to the adult community. We always try to build on the excellent rapport we develop with you and your child. We are committed to continuing education courses to learn the latest techniques, but we also know that spending time with each of you is the best way to ensure that you and your child are receiving the meticulous care you deserve.

We are your child's dental office, and possibly yours as well. Please feel free to share us with your family and friends. We take your referrals as a great compliment and an affirmation that you feel secure and comfortable with our team. We also know this means you've entrusted us with the care of your family and friends and we look forward to meeting them!

## office information

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### Office Hours

Mon-Thu 8:00 am – 5:00 pm  
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### Contact Information

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### Office Staff

Lorraine ..... Office Manager  
 Cheryl, Jackie, Laura... Dental Hygienists  
 Deb, Michele, Leah .....  
 ..... Financial Coordinators  
 Kimberly ..... Appointment Coordinator  
 Kim ..... Insurance Coordinator  
 Sylvia, Aimee, Beth, Holly, Ashley .....  
 ..... Treatment Coordinators



## Spot The Difference!

Ten changes have been made to the bottom picture. Can you spot them?



## Lose Something?

We may have found it!  
 Just let us know if you would like to see our lost and found.



### Parent Reminder • Don't be late!

When summer arrived, so did the road construction. Unfortunately, the road construction is expected to last for several months making traveling from any direction to our office a challenge. Please allow extra time for travel in order to make your dental appointment on time.