

## COLUMN

## Dental Resolutions for the New Year

I have never been a fan of the "New Year's Resolution," because it seems like these grand changes in life only last for about the first two weeks into January! It takes conscious effort and dedication to shift our everyday practices. It is not an easy task, but the rewards can be worthwhile if you commit to breaking these old habits resulting in a more healthy routine. Sometimes it is just a decision that you have been putting off that can result in a healthy lifelong change. So how about a New Year's Resolution that involves making your smile and gums healthy and making your teeth last throughout your lifetime? Not only is good oral health essential to overall physical health, but numerous studies have proven that your smile can affect how others perceive you, your self-esteem and your success in life. It may not be as "sexy" as achieving those six-pack abs, but I promise you it is a much easier goal to attain, and it will have a much greater impact on your overall life.

**More Flossing and Better Brushing:**

Did you know that only half of all Americans say they floss once per day and one in five people actually admit to not brushing their teeth every day! Routine home care is essential to keeping our mouths healthy, and implementing a proper daily regiment is very easy to accomplish if you commit to it. I have always been very "religious" with brushing my teeth 2-3 times per day; however I admit I was not always into a routine with my flossing. Even though I preached to my patients about how important flossing was for their gums and the foundation of healthy teeth, it was not part of my daily routine. I tried to

incorporate flossing into my home care, but it never became the habit it needed to be. Finally, a few years ago, after noticing some bleeding and inflammation in my gums, I knew it was time for me to start practicing what I preach. Within about a month, my gums were healthy with no bleeding and flossing was just part of my daily routine. Even dentists like myself can have some bad oral hygiene habits they need to break, so start today and do it for yourself.

**Maintain your Routine Dental Visits:**

Oral health is not separate from overall health; in fact, oral health is often associated with other conditions, including stroke, heart disease and diabetes. Perhaps it is because most of us see a dentist for our teeth and a general physician for overall care that we separate the health of our mouth from the rest of our body, but this should not be the case. Unfortunately, many people do not keep up with their routine dental visits. Despite having impeccable home care with daily brushing and flossing, professional dental cleanings and exams are critical in maintaining proper oral health. It is impossible for you to clean beneath your gums where the build-up of tartar can cause inflammation of the gums leading to periodontal (gum) disease. It is this disease of the gums that has been linked to the conditions mentioned above including diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease.

Depending on your specific level of oral health needs, your dentist may recommend professional cleanings every 6 months, 4 months, or even 3 months if necessary. There are many reasons that people are unable to maintain the

proper intervals of dental visits each year; however a good resolution would be to commit to maintaining the health of your mouth and keep these visits consistent. Life is very busy for everyone these days, but here are some recommendations that may help you stay more regular with your dental cleanings:

**1. Schedule your next visit while you are already at the dentist.** This will put things on your calendar so that time doesn't get away from you. As we know, life moves fast!

**2. Find a dentist that is located near your house or work.** Many patients still go to their childhood dentist, which is very loyal, but can sometimes prevent dental visits from occurring due to lack of convenience. I always appreciate my patients' loyalty, however I have referred many of my patients over the years to dentists in their new area. I would rather have my patients receiving consistent dental care somewhere more convenient, than having their oral health suffer because it is too difficult for them to come to our office.

**3. Call today and schedule your appointment!** Make the commitment to get things back on track with your oral health and get yourself scheduled at your dentist. If you presently do not have a dentist, find one in your area that appeals to you and your family.

*Jeffrey S. Haddad D.D.S. of Doolin & Haddad Advanced Dentistry completed his dental education at the University of Michigan in 2001. Dr. Haddad is a fellow of the prestigious Las Vegas Institute for Advanced Dental Studies. He lectures nationally on cosmetic dentistry, TMJ disorders and practice management.*

*For more information, visit [www.rochesteradvanced-dentistry.com](http://www.rochesteradvanced-dentistry.com).*



Dentally Speaking  
by  
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