

Consider which toothpaste is the right one for you

Question: Which toothpaste is right for me? How do I choose the right one?

Answer: The first consideration in choosing any toothpaste is to be sure that it contains fluoride, which has been enormously successful in reducing tooth decay in children and adults.

ASK THE DENTIST



DR. DAVID BANDA

Since fluoride was introduced into the public drinking water over 50 years ago, Americans have enjoyed a significant decrease in the amount decay in their mouths. And the use of fluoride toothpaste contributes to this reduction of decay as well.

The second consideration in selecting a toothpaste is that it should have the American Dental Association's seal of acceptance.

Toothpastes bearing the ADA seal of acceptance have met the ADA's requirements for safety and effectiveness.

There are many subgroups within the category of fluoride toothpaste that make the selection of a toothpaste quite confusing. I would like to provide some clarity on this matter for you.

Specialized toothpastes are designed to meet certain specific needs such as decay prevention, tartar control, desensitization, stain removal, whitening, plaque and gingivitis reduction, or a combination of these.

We have already discussed how the use of fluoridated toothpaste can reduce dental decay, but please keep in mind that regardless of which fluoridated toothpaste you use, it's recommended With you brush for two full minutes in order to gain the maximum benefit.

Tartar Control

These toothpastes are designed to decrease tartar build-up on teeth. Proper brushing and flossing techniques, however, are actually more important in this situation than the actual toothpaste. The use of a tartar-control toothpaste accompanied by poor home care technique will still yield tartar build-up.

Still, people more prone to tartar build-up — and therefore gum disease — have found that these toothpastes have helped by inhibiting the ability of the plaque and tartar to stick to the teeth. It should be noted that tartar-control toothpastes can prevent tartar above the gumline by as much as 30 percent, but they do not remove tartar once it has formed. Tartar can only be removed by a professional tooth cleaning.

Sensitivity Reduction

These toothpastes are designed to decrease the sensitivity that people sometimes experience due to air or temperature extremes on the gums and the exposed root surfaces of teeth. However, an improper technique such as brushing too aggressively with too hard a brush, which consequently can wear away gums and damage roots, can still leave people with sensitive teeth regardless of the toothpaste.

Sensitive teeth may reflect a more serious problem such as decay, a fractured tooth, or a nerve abscess. It's best to have your dentist rule out any severe problems before you begin using sensitivity-reducing toothpaste. If these products are appropriate for you, look for those containing one of the two ingredients that the ADA recognizes as effective at reducing the discomfort of sensitive teeth — strontium chloride and potassium nitrate.

These ingredients either block the tube-like channels that pass through the teeth and connect to nerves (strontium chloride), or reduce the ability of the nerves to transmit pain (potassium nitrate). It may take six weeks or more before improvement is noted.

Stain Removal

These products are popular among smokers and others whose diet may cause stain to accumulate on teeth. These toothpastes can be effective in removing superficial stain in these situations, but they cannot remove decay that may also appear dark. Furthermore, some of these toothpastes contain abrasives such as silica, which is effective in removing stain when used properly but can damage teeth (especially exposed roots) when used improperly.

It's best to consult with your dentist or hygienist for specific recommendations.

Whitening

Many tooth-whitening toothpastes contain silica and/or hydrogen peroxide, a common ingredient in tooth-bleaching systems. Whitening toothpastes have been shown to be effective, but the hydrogen peroxide is not found in concentrations high enough to bleach teeth. And some types of discoloration will not be improved by any type of toothpaste.

When peroxide is used in a toothpaste, it is often accompanied by baking soda. The combination of these two ingredients results in a bubbling action that may improve the feel of the toothpaste in the mouth.

Plaque Control and Gingivitis Reduction

Most toothpastes in this category rely on reducing the enzymatic activity of certain microorganisms in the mouth or by an antimicrobial effect. Many studies have shown that these agents reduce plaque and gingivitis by 25-30 percent. Some of the antimicrobial agents, such as stannous fluoride, may cause staining of the teeth. Please consult your dentist or hygienist for more information.

Toothpastes are available in a variety of forms: pastes, gels, powders, two component systems, etc. The reason for these differences is purely personal preference. There is no significant clinical difference in effectiveness between a paste and a gel, for example.

Some toothpastes have been known to cause irritation of the soft tissues of the mouth. It's wise to consult your dentist or hygienist if you experience any adverse reaction to a toothpaste, or if you require some additional clarification regarding the selection of a toothpaste for your particular situation.

(Dr. David Banda is a general dentist in Bloomfield Hills. He graduated from the University of Michigan and is a member of the American Dental Association, the Michigan Dental Association and the Oakland County Dental Society. His column will appear every other week in the Health & Fitness section. Send questions or comments to Dr. Banda at 805 of staff writer Chris Mayer at: The Eccentric Newspapers, 248 E. Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009.)

New program deals with grief

Tapestry, the only grief program of its kind in Southeast Michigan, will be formally introduced Thursday evening at The Community House in Birmingham.

The grieving process is never easy, but it's a journey that needn't be taken alone.

"Tapestry: A Program for Grieving and Living" will be introduced and formally kicked off Thursday, May 21 during a free Town Meeting on Grieving and Living at the Birmingham Community House (380 S. Bates). This forum, scheduled to run from 7 p.m.-9 p.m., is open to the public.

Presented by the Birmingham Maple Clinic, Tapestry is the only grief program of its kind in Southeast Michigan. It is a therapy-based program designed to help families deal with death and loss of a family member. "This program will help families learn to go on with their lives after the loss of an immediate family member," said program director Lori Edelson, M.S.W. Edelson, who also serves as the director of the Birmingham Maple Clinic, created Tapestry in response to a community need for a place where families can learn to cope with such losses.

"Family members will be able to embrace and express their grief in a safe environment. They will learn to live with the loss and begin to function more effectively."

Modeled after the Lansing-based "Elio's Place: A Children Center for Embracing Loss Effectively," Tapestry is based on the theory that the journey of surviving a loss can be made

easier by connecting with other people and sharing their own stories. Jerro Corry, M.A., C.S.W., founder of Elio's Place, will be the featured speaker at the Town Meeting on Grieving and Living.

"The Town Meeting is an important first step in launching Tapestry," Edelson said. "Part of Tapestry is giving families the tools they need to cope with their loss. Our program is one tool, but there are many other community resources. Many people, especially in the midst of dealing with a crisis, don't know what other resources are available."

The Town Meeting will feature a panel of community members representing various resources in and around Metropolitan Detroit, including children's grief expert David Tachner, director of Ira Kaufman Funeral Chapel; Joe Perry, support group facilitator, Gilda's Club; Linda Diehl, M.S.W., home care and

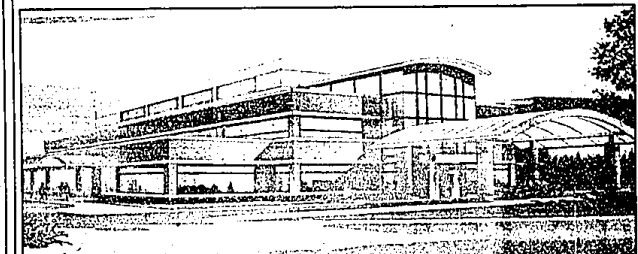
hospice expert, Karmanos Cancer Center; and Rabbi E.B. Friedman, spiritual leader, Hospice of Michigan.

For more information regarding Tapestry or Thursday's Town Meeting, contact the Birmingham Maple Clinic at (248) 656-6559.

Tapestry will subsequently convene inside the private offices of the Birmingham Maple Clinic one evening each week. This program will allow individual family members to split up and attend specialized, concurrent group therapy sessions. The groups will be organized based on age (children, teens, adult), and adult groups will be separated by those who have lost a child and those who have lost a spouse.

Each group will be led by a licensed or certified psychotherapist with extensive experience and training on grief work and therapy groups.

Center of attention



Helping hand: St. Joseph Mercy-Oakland opened its new \$15 million, 60,000-square-foot Alice & Robert Gustafson Center (above) in March. Pictured at left are Robert Gustafson (left), Alice Gustafson, Executive Director Denise McLean and Medical Director Robert Padilla, M.D.

Gustafson Center enhances care

St. Joseph Mercy-Oakland in Pontiac has combined comfort and convenience with technology to create the new Alice & Robert Gustafson Center — a \$15 million, 60,000-square-foot facility offering Oakland County residents superior outpatient services.

The center opened in March to rave reviews. Located just south of the main hospital adjacent to the Harold E. Fox Center, it features six operating rooms, three minor procedure rooms, pre-operative and recovery rooms, administrative space, pediatric and adult waiting rooms, two mammography rooms, an ultrasound room, and an esthetician's scanning area. The first floor of the facility is

dedicated to ambulatory surgery, mammography and women's services, while the second floor will be leased as medical office space.

"What we have now is a place where nervous and frightened patients can feel comfortable and relaxed," said Robert Padilla, M.D., the facility's medical director. "Gone is the overcrowded, hurried atmosphere that plagued us as we outgrew our previous space. We now have a beautiful, spacious environment that benefits both patients and staff."

Like many hospitals and health systems, demands for outpatient services at St. Joseph Mercy-Oakland continue to increase because of such

factors as successful alternative treatment capabilities, technology development, pressure to reduce costs, managed care payers, and primary care development. Between 1991 and 1997, outpatient visits to Michigan hospitals increased by nearly 60 percent.

Said St. Joseph's President and CEO Thomas Feurig: "We realized that in order to fulfill our mission and vision to serve the health needs of our community, we needed to accommodate the increasing numbers of outpatient visits."

For referrals and more information, call the Mercy Health Line at 1-800-372-5084. St. Joseph Mercy-Oakland is located at 900 Woodward Avenue.

Pick the best fruit this year

Spring and summer are my favorite seasons for eating because of all the delicious fresh fruits in season to snack on.

TALK TO THE MIRROR



FLORINE MARK

Fruit is not only a sweet snack, but it can also be the perfect addition to most any meal. Apples, strawberries add zip to salads; berries and bananas can cheer up your morning cereal; and oranges, lemons and peaches can liven up chicken dishes, salads and desserts!

With so many choices this time of year, it can be overwhelming deciding which ones are the ripest and juiciest in each variety. Then, once you get your careful selections of fruit home, many people don't know how to store it. There are some guidelines that can make picking and storing fresh fruit easier and more successful.

Tips For Picking Fruit

■ Apples — Look for firm, well-colored fruit with no bruises or tender spots.

■ Bananas — Those that are firm, bright, and without bruises are the best choices. If the whole banana peel — or even just the tip — is green it has not developed its full flavor. The best flavor is when it's yellow with some brown speckles.

■ Cantaloupes — Look for a yellowish rind but not too strong a yellow coloring, and for those that yield slightly to light thumb pressure on the non-stem end. Ripe ones should have a cantaloupe smell and coarse, corky netting covering the skin.

■ Grapefruit and oranges — Those that are firm and heavy for their size tend to be the juiciest. The smoother, thinner-skinned fruits also have more juice than others of their varieties do. Avoid dry and spongy-looking skins that may encompass drier, less tasty "guts."

■ Grapes — Plump, colorful grapes that are firmly attached to the stems are your best bet. Stay away from grapes that are soft or wrinkled or that have bleached areas around the stem ends.

■ Honeydew melons — Rinds should be yellowish-white to creamy in color with a slight softening at the blossom end. The best melons have a soft, velvety texture with no punctures or bruises which may lead to decay.

■ Kiwifruit — Buy firm fruit if you're willing to wait for it to ripen — which is when it's slightly yields to the touch — or buy it ripe and eat it soon after it's purchased. Be sure you get it

HEALTHY LIVING

Local physicians honored

Twenty local physicians were recently honored by the Michigan State Medical Society (MSMS) for 50 years of service to their patients and the medical profession. A record 116 physicians were honored for their contributions during a reception and ceremony before the 300 physician-delegates attending the 133rd annual meeting of the MSMS House of Delegates on May 2 in Des Moines.

Here are the honored physicians based in the Eccentric coverage area: Anne C. Kuhn, M.D., Beverly Hills; Ruben S. Kurnets, M.D., Birmingham; John H. McLaughlin, M.D., Birmingham;

Jay J. Van Zoeren, M.D., Birmingham; Hamzaasp B. Darian, M.D., Bloomfield Hills; Robert W. Dustin, M.D., Bloomfield Hills; Warren W. Goodwin, M.D., Bloomfield Hills; A.T. Karney, M.D., Bloomfield Hills; Erwin G. Pear, M.D., Bloomfield Hills; William H. Peirce, M.D., Bloomfield Hills; Robert E. Richard, M.D., Bloomfield Hills; Eugene J. Cennar, M.D., Bloomfield Hills; Raymond S. Henkin, M.D., Bloomfield Hills; Edward T. Konno, M.D., Bloomfield Hills; Louis F. Lawrence, M.D., Bloomfield Hills; Andreas A. Marcotetti, M.D., Bloomfield Hills; Seymour H. Rapp, M.D., Bloomfield Hills; Steven E. Cohen, M.D., Farmington Hills; John A. Gilroy, M.D., Franklin;

and Kenneth Israel, M.D., Franklin.

MedMax

The Rochester/Troy MedMax Health & Care Superstore (6843 Rochester Road) will present an Arthritis Health Fair from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, May 30. Receive up-to-date information and products that can make daily living a little bit easier.

For more information regarding MedMax's May Wellness calendar, visit the internet at www.medmax.com or call 1-888-4-MedMax. (Submit items for Healthy Living in our April 1998 issue by fax at 248-644-1314 or by mail at The Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009.)