Time for a re-call
See low risk patients every two years, dentists are reminded

Dentists are being reminded of their duty to adhere to the National Institute for Health Clinical Excellence guidelines for dental appointment recalls. One point that has caused debate is that dentists in England are reportedly seeing patients more than they need to. According to the briefing, this is in breach of their government contracts.

NICE guidelines state that adult patients should be recalled three months and two years, “based on a risk assessment, taking into account a checklist of risk factors, such as alcohol and tobacco use” whilst the recommended interval for children is between three and 12 months.

The guidelines also state that “the new dental contract, which will be based on registration, capitation and quality, will ensure that patients are seen at least every three months. As you know, the guidance states that the appropriate recall interval will depend on an individual’s clinical and risk factors, and according to CDO’s letter, the dentist will take a patient’s views on board before making a final decision, therefore it has taken time for patients and the profession to adjust to this change.

“Some patients still have an expectation to be seen six-monthly.

“As you know, the guidance states that the appropriate interval will depend on an individual’s clinical and risk factors, and according to CDO’s letter, the dentist will take a patient’s views on board before making a final decision, therefore it has taken time for patients and the profession to adjust to this change.

“Many patients want to see a dentist more frequently (either to pick up problems early, such as gum disease, or for reassurance about their oral health) and dentists have to change patient habits as well.

“The BDA agrees that recall intervals need to be tailored to the individual and based on the risk status of the patient. There are a wide range of risk factors to decide upon the recall interval, including the following major ones: Smoking or tobacco use, excessive alcohol use, cardiovascular disease, bleeding disorders, anti-coagulants, immunosuppression, diabetes, glucose medications, phenytoin, acid reflux, lack of fluoride, high caries in mothers and siblings, recent and previous periodontal disease, high sugar intake, high acid intake, new decay, anterior fillings, root caries, heavily restored dentition, mucosal lesions, poor oral health, plaque retention factors, low saliva flow, tooth wear, no fluoride, poor attendance pattern, and people with special needs.

“The guidance doesn’t necessarily clarify ‘how many?’ of the risk factors or ‘how bad,’ these need to be to achieve an ‘at risk’ status, so interpreting what is an appropriate recall period for a given patient may not always be clear cut.”

Mammoth joke? A Red Cross charity shop in Umeå in northern Sweden has received an unlikely donation. Quite unlike the usual donations of clothes or furniture the volunteers were given two sets of teeth from a prehistoric mammoth. They received the gift on April Fool’s Day and thought at first that it was an April fool’s joke. The teeth, which were in possession of a resident at an elderly resident’s home who had passed away, are to be checked out by the Swedish Board of Agriculture; if they are not of any monetary value then the charity shop will be allowed to display them.

Art and science unite Art and science have united for a project needing 12,000 baby teeth to decorate a “coral castle”. The idea, which came from a meeting between Professor Sara Rankin, a biologist at Imperial College London, and the artist Gina Czarnecki, is aimed to inspire debate about adult stem cells. They say arguments over stem cells are focused mostly on the ethics of using embryos and that some scientists are trying to grow new teeth using dental pulp in milk teeth. Children are being asked to donate their teeth to the project, called Palaces, which will then create a magical sculpture of teeth. The artwork will go on display at the Bluecoat in Liverpool in December and then move to the Science Museum in London next year.

Teen hits high notes A talented teenage singer who was diagnosed with oral cancer when he was just ten years old, has realised his dream of singing again. Eddie Masih was left with severe paralysis on one side of his face after undergoing operations to remove the tumour, which made it very difficult to sing. But he was determined to sing again and Eddie recently came third in a World Singing competition. Having been encouraged by people’s positive feedback and comments on social networking sites Eddie is now more determined than ever to try and forge a career in music and he is looking forward to doing more gigs and attending the X Factor auditions in the near future.

Infection prevention Richard Musgrave discusses the importance of cleaning teeth. They will go to the tooth fairy as they will not be allowed to display them. The charity shop will then move to the Science Museum in London next year.

Teen hits high notes
A talented teenage singer who was diagnosed with oral cancer when he was just ten years old, has realised his dream of singing again. Eddie Masih was left with severe paralysis on one side of his face after undergoing operations to remove the tumour, which made it very difficult to sing. But he was determined to sing again and Eddie recently came third in a World Singing competition. Having been encouraged by people’s positive feedback and comments on social networking sites Eddie is now more determined than ever to try and forge a career in music and he is looking forward to doing more gigs and attending the X Factor auditions in the near future.