

# Health talk



**DENTAL CARE**

**Jeffrey Gross, DDS, FAGD**

## Q: Hey Doc, Can You Help with A New Year's Resolution?

**A:** I would like to wish everyone a Happy New Year. I want to pick up on last week's column, where I offered some suggestions to help us move toward health for the new year. I spoke about how many of us start with great resolutions but fall off the wagon within a week or two. This concept is shown to be true by study after study for many years. This thought was echoed in a book written by James Clear. The title of his book is "Atomic Habits." He advocates not setting goals. Goals are very lofty and, often, cannot be attained. This approach is a formula for failure. If we don't reach our goal, then we give up. It is better to "focus on becoming 1% better every day." Once we create habits and these become routine, we find that we are inching our way to that goal. The idea, though, is not to focus on the target. Focus on the small steps that turn into routines for us. This book discusses a similar approach to the one I described in last week's column. Let's pick some straightforward, attainable, and repeatable activities to create the smallest changes in our life. I once heard a wise man respond to a question on this very topic. When the questioner asked if the difference that he wanted to do was adequate, the wise man replied in the following manner. He said, "take that activity and reduce it by 50%." In other words, your change is too significant. Granted, you felt that it was not large enough. On the contrary, it is too large. With that in mind, let's pick up on the rest of my five tips for a healthy "tooth year."

Last week, we mentioned and discussed:

1. Get a new toothbrush.
2. Get a flossing aid and floss only one tooth

Here's the rest of my tips for you.

3. **Whiten your teeth.** We all love white teeth. We associate whiter and brighter teeth with health and youth. Whiter teeth also make us feel better about ourselves. This little decision can be the springboard to brushing better and even thinking twice before we eat that whole bag of chocolate candies as we now love our teeth and how they look.

4. **Bond a single chipped or discolored tooth.** We all have one tooth that is discolored or chipped. More often than not, this is right in front of your mouth. Every time you brush your teeth or comb your hair, your bothersome tooth stands out like a sore thumb. A simple visit to correct the color, fix an edge or close a space can make all the difference in the world for you. I just treated a patient who had dark yellow tooth next to his front tooth. A 30-minute appointment with no shots or discomfort made him happy and pleased with his new smile. All we did was fix one tooth!

5. **Make your next six-month cleaning appointment before you**

leave the office. So often, we hear, "I don't know what I am doing in six months." Well, guess what? If you make an appointment, you will now have something to do in six months. By being vigilant and proactive about yourself, you can help ensure that your mouth and oral health are in the best shape that they can be.

I could list many more suggestions, but I want to keep it short and straightforward. I encourage you to find one that resonates with you and take it on. My tips are so simple, but they are the first step to awareness of your oral health and creating a beautiful and long-lasting smile. Oh, I forgot to mention a Healthy Smile. If you want more information or tips, call Nikki or Jamie at 440.951.7856, They are eager to help you on your journey. I look forward to hearing from you.

*Jeffrey Gross, DDS, FAGD is an Ohio licensed general dentist and is on the staff of Case Western Reserve School of Dental Medicine.*

### The Healthy Smile

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**SHOULDER ARTHROSCOPY**

**Eric M. Parsons, M.D.**

## Q: I have been diagnosed with a rotator cuff tear and surgery has been recommended. What size incisions can I expect and what is the recovery time?

**A:** The technical aspects of rotator cuff repair involve placing small screws in the upper portion of the arm bone (humerus) where the rotator cuff tendon normally attaches. The screws are called suture anchors and are made from a special form of biodegradable plastic that the body will naturally absorb over time. The suture anchors are armed with high strength sutures that are then placed through the torn tendon, and through a variety of pulley-type techniques the tendon is returned back to the bone at the location of the anchor.

The advent of arthroscopic techniques has provided improved access to the rotator cuff using small instruments with the assistance of video technology, allowing for treatment of the rotator cuff through a few tiny incisions without trauma to the overlying deltoid muscle. In addition to reduced pain from the minimally invasive nature of the surgery, arthroscopy affords the surgeon greater visualization of rotator cuff tear patterns as the arthroscope can reach places that are not easily seen with open surgery. Today, virtually all rotator cuff repair surgery is performed through arthroscopic techniques. Even after the rotator cuff

tendon has been repaired back to the humerus bone, optimal success from the operation is not achieved unless there is true biologic healing of the tendon back down to the bone. This is a process that occurs very slowly over time thus explaining the need for strict protection of the shoulder following surgery.

Patients are placed into a specialized sling which they are expected to wear for 4 to 6 weeks after surgery. The sling can be removed for bathing and changing clothes and for appropriate physical therapy, but no purposeful, active movement of the shoulder is permitted as this can compromise the healing process. The optimal approach to physical therapy following rotator cuff repair remains a topic of ongoing research without widespread consensus. Most research favors a very slow progression of therapy, with a brief period of complete rest followed by several weeks of passive movement of the shoulder where the patient does not assist in the movement of the arm. Over time active lifting of the arm is permitted followed by a program of strengthening.

To watch a video of Dr. Parsons performing arthroscopic rotator cuff repair visit [www.ohioshouldercenter.com](http://www.ohioshouldercenter.com).

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**INSURANCE**

**Laura Mutsko Agent and CSA**

## Q: Every winter I struggle with anxiety. Does Medicare cover mental health therapy?

**A:** You are not alone. Many people struggle with anxiety, especially in the winter. If you have never sought help for treatment of anxiety before, you may find yourself in uncharted territory. But I can assure you that Medicare can be a valuable resource when it comes to supporting mental health.

Medicare covers mental health care, including depression screenings, psychological counseling, alcohol and drug abuse counseling, outpatient treatment programs and more. Mental health services, including individual counseling will be covered by Medicare Part B at 80% of the approved charge after the annual deductible is met.

Mental Health care through the following providers is covered:

- Psychiatrists or other doctors
- Clinical psychologists
- Clinical social workers
- Clinical nurse specialists
- Nurse practitioners
- Physician assistants
- Marriage & family therapists
- Mental health counselors

Those with Original Medicare can call 1-800-MEDICARE for help finding a participating mental health professional. Those with a Medicare Advantage plan should call their plan directly for a list of mental health care providers in their plan's network. Another option is to contact your primary care physician and ask for their recommendation.

It is always best to check with Medicare or your Medicare Advantage plan to learn all eligibility requirements. In addition, always ask your health

care provider if they accept your Medicare insurance before you begin receiving services.

If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis and would like to talk to a trained crisis counselor, call or text 988, the free and confidential Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. You can also connect with a counselor through web chat at [988lifeline.org](http://988lifeline.org).

If you have questions on insurance including Life, Health, Medicare Advantage and Medicare Supplements, please give me a call at 440-255-5700 or email me at [Lmutsko@mutskoinsurance.com](mailto:Lmutsko@mutskoinsurance.com). I look forward to helping you get the protection you need.

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*We do not offer every plan available in your area. Currently, we represent seven organizations which offer eighty-four products in your area. Please contact Medicare.gov, 1-800-MEDICARE, or your local State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) to get information on all of your options.*



**AUDIOLOGY**

**Dr. Jane Kukula, AuD**

## Q: What why is Bluetooth a good thing in hearing aids?

**A:** Bluetooth hearing aids provide a revolutionary solution for individuals with hearing loss by enabling you to connect wirelessly to a variety of devices such as smartphones, laptops, and televisions. This technology allows you to stream audio directly into your hearing aids, offering a more seamless and efficient way to communicate and interact with the world around you. With Bluetooth connectivity, you can enjoy clearer sound quality, greater convenience, and enhanced listening experiences.

One of the key advantages of Bluetooth hearing aids is the ability to control and adjust settings directly from a smartphone or other device. This remote-control feature allows you to customize your hearing aid setting in real-time, in real-life situations. Additionally, Bluetooth connectivity enables you to easily switch between different audio sources, such as phone calls and music, without having to remove their hearing aids or use additional accessories. This convenience and flexibility make Bluetooth hearing aids a popular choice for many individuals seeking a more advanced and user-friendly hearing solution.

Furthermore, Bluetooth hearing aids offer enhanced connectivity and communication options for you in various environments. Whether in a noisy restaurant, at a crowded social gathering, or watching television at home, Bluetooth technology helps people with hearing loss stay connected and engaged with your surroundings. By wirelessly connecting to devices, you can enjoy clearer sound and better communication, thus improving your overall quality of life and social interactions.

Bluetooth hearing aids represent a significant advancement in hearing technology, providing users with greater control, convenience, and connectivity in their daily lives. Start with a hearing evaluation, call 440-205-8848 for an appointment. Life Sounds Great!

**The Hearing Center Advanced Audiology Concepts**

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# Health talk



## SHOULDER ARTHROSCOPY

**Eric M. Parsons, M.D.**

**Q:** I have heard that recovery from rotator cuff surgery takes some time. Why is that?

**A:** The critical component to a successful outcome from rotator cuff surgery is a robust healing response and sound structural integrity at the repair site. A major factor in that integrity is meticulous arthroscopic surgical technique and the skill of the surgeon. However, in even the most technically well-performed surgeries complete rotator cuff healing is not a guarantee. A host of additional factors, some related to the patients themselves and others related to the approach to postoperative recovery can ultimately determine success or failure.

Patient characteristics such as tear size, how chronic the tear is, other medical conditions such as diabetes and smoking can all impact healing and surgical outcome. Overly aggressive physical therapy or premature return to use of the surgically repaired shoulder can also be detrimental to healing. As our understanding of rotator cuff tendon to bone healing has evolved, so has our approach to rehabilitation and return to use and an appreciation that a less is more and slow and steady philosophy results in the best outcomes. An overzealous desire to “get back to normal” can compromise the healing tendon and if the rotator cuff tendon fails to heal the results will suffer.

Because of this, for the first 4 to 6 weeks of recovery most surgeons who perform a high volume of rotator cuff surgery and have the greatest knowledge of state of the art rehabilitation protocols will permit little or no shoulder movement, even with the supervision of a physical therapist, and sling immobilization. After this initial period of maximum protection there is a slow progression of range of motion exercises and ultimately strengthening that typically requires another 3-4 months to achieve optimal results. Successful rotator cuff surgery requires full commitment from the patient and an understanding that investment in near term protection gives the best chance for long term satisfaction.

To learn more about rotator cuff repair surgery visit [ohioshouldercenter.com](http://ohioshouldercenter.com)

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## INSURANCE

**Laura Mutsko Agent and CSA**

**Q:** Why is it necessary for me to tell my doctor everything I'm taking?

**A:** One of the questions your physician, specialist or dentist will usually ask you is, “What medications are you taking?” Unfortunately, many people under-report this because they only think of prescription medications. Others do not want their doctor to know they are self-medicating with alcohol, tobacco, or marijuana-based products. However, your doctor needs to know the dosage and frequency of all products you are taking, including:

- Vitamins
- Tobacco, nicotine patches and gum
- THC products including ‘gummies’
- Alcoholic beverages
- Herbal supplements
- Aspirin or other pain relievers
- Antacids
- Allergy medicines
- Cough syrups

Some of these can interact, causing unpleasant or dangerous side effects.

Depending on the drug, they can cause high blood pressure, insomnia, depressed mood, or heart issues. Other symptoms of poor drug interactions may be mistaken for signs of aging. Knowing everything you are using is necessary to give your health care team the complete picture.

Whenever you visit your doctor, bring a list of all your medications and over-the-counter products with you. Or just bring them all with you in a bag. The office personnel would much rather help you with your medication list than have you guess what you are taking. Ask your physician to go over the proper dosing instructions, time of day to take your meds, and confirm that you should continue taking each one.

Finally, clean out your medicine cabinet and safely dispose of any outdated medications. Please do not flush them. Drop them off at your local police station for proper disposal.

For information on Health and Life Insurance, including Individual insurance, Medicare Supplements, Medicare Advantage Plans, Vision, and Dental plans, call 440-255-5700 or email me at [Lmutsko@mutskoinsurance.com](mailto:Lmutsko@mutskoinsurance.com). We look forward to assisting you.

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*We do not offer every plan available in your area. Currently, we represent seven organizations which offer eighty-four products in your area. Please contact Medicare.gov, 1-800-MEDICARE, or your local State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) to get information on all of your options.*



## AUDIOLOGY

**Dr. Jane Kukula, AuD**

**Q:** Are hearing loss and dementia related?

**A:** Hearing loss and dementia are two common conditions that often go hand in hand. While they may seem like two completely unrelated issues, research has shown that there is a significant connection between the two. In fact, studies have found that individuals with untreated hearing loss are more likely to develop dementia than those with normal hearing.

It's important to understand the link between hearing loss and dementia in order to better care for those affected by these conditions. One reason for this connection is that untreated hearing loss can lead to social isolation and communication deficits, which are risk factors for developing dementia. When individuals have difficulty hearing and communicating with others, they are more likely to withdraw from social interactions and become isolated. This can have a negative impact on their cognitive function and overall brain health.

Additionally, hearing loss can also lead to changes in the brain's structure and function. When the auditory system is not functioning properly, the brain may undergo neuroplastic changes in order to compensate for the lack of auditory input. This can put strain on the brain and increase the risk of cognitive decline and dementia.

Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest that untreated hearing loss can contribute to the development of cognitive deficits. When individuals have difficulty hearing, their brains must work harder to process auditory information. This increased cognitive load can detract from other cognitive functions, such as memory and attention, and make individuals more susceptible to cognitive decline and dementia. If you notice changes in hearing or memory have a hearing check as part of your evaluation. Call 440-205-8848 to schedule an appointment. Life Sounds Great!

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## DENTAL CARE

**Jeffrey Gross, DDS, FAGD**

**Q:** I'm Missing My Front Teeth

**A:** On Monday, as I reviewed my schedule, I saw a patient with an indicator that he was new. However, next to his name was a note he saw me a while back. When I went to greet him, his name rang a bell, but that was my only recollection of him. When he smiled, he had no lower front teeth. He told me that he had a bridge in the front of his mouth that came loose. He presented that bridge to me in a plastic container. The bridge was a type that was very common many years ago. The bridge was bonded and used frequently before dental implants. Just like dental

implants are kind to adjacent teeth, so too does the bonded bridge do well in that regard. He told me that in the late 1970's, I placed that bridge, and it just came out recently.

Nothing that is man-made lasts for decades in the human body. Everything wears out or fails as time progresses. The average dental work may last ten or twenty years if you have a good practitioner and all the right conditions. Lasting almost fifty years is unheard of. Yet my bridge did just that!

He proceeded to tell me that he had not seen a dentist in many years because he could not find one to his liking. He assumed I had moved on, and only when he ate a holiday dinner with his family did his daughter tell him that was not the case. His daughter was not enamored that her dad was toothless in the front of his mouth.

His lack of dental care resulted in gum disease and missing back teeth. Before we even discussed what I was going to do with his cosmetic problem, I needed to address the condition of the gums and bones holding the teeth in place. I told him that, with his permission, we would start fresh and renew his mouth and his oral health.

Next, I turned to the cause of the bridge loss. Bridges usually fail due to cavities starting around and attacking the teeth under the bridge. In the absence of pain, a patient will never be aware of the problem until something comes loose or falls off. When I examined his mouth, there were no signs of decay around the supporting teeth of the bridge. I mentioned earlier that he had no back teeth. When someone is missing teeth, the body compensates by using other teeth to do the job of chewing.

Without his back teeth, the chewing and grinding teeth, he shifted his eating style to the front teeth. Therein lies the problem. We often talk about the misuse of front teeth for chewing. Front teeth are thin and don't have large, broad grinding surfaces like back teeth. Chewing with the front puts tremendous stress and pressure on those smaller teeth. This changed chewing pattern resulted in an overload and failure of the front bridge.

My plan for him is to deal with his main concern of cosmetics as quickly as possible and give him back his smile. Once this is accomplished, I will ensure things last by replacing his back teeth with a permanent solution. I was so happy to see him after all this time, and I will do my best to restore his confidence in dentistry. If you have been avoiding the dentist, please call us to see if we can get you moving in a positive and healthy way. Our number is 440.951.7856, and Nikki or Jamie will set up our meeting. I look forward to hearing from you.

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