

## The Holiday Rush...

Logically, one might think that dental offices get a little less crowded as the holiday season rolls around. After all, spending money on this year's latest and greatest holiday gadget is quite a bit more fun than a root canal or a new front tooth. Of course, with today's pace of technology, those teeth will generally outlast the latest and greatest gadgets.

In reality, November through New Year's is a busy time in most dental offices. Our waiting list generally grows and grows this time of year. If you want your teeth fixed before 2010, it's best to get scheduled now.

There are several factors that seem to fill up dental chairs during the holidays. The most common factor has to do with dental insurance. Most dental plans have a set yearly benefit, usually between one and two thousand dollars. In most every plan, this benefit disappears at the end of the year if unclaimed, never to be seen again. That is akin to a two thousand dollar bonus check from your employer that never gets cashed. Smart dental shoppers and/or procrastinators like me seek to cash in this bonus (sometimes as late as December) and fill up dental chairs this time of year. If you believe you may have benefits left, call your family dentist or insurance company to see if they expire in 2009. If they do, ask your doctor and team to help you maximize your benefits before they expire.

Another reason that dentists seem to get a holiday rush has to do with taxes and different health savings plans. Almost every year we see at least one patient who wants to get every tooth in their mouth fixed...yesterday. Often, they have some type of savings plan that expires or becomes taxed at the end of the fiscal year. Please do not take tax advice from a dentist, but please do look into these plans before December 29<sup>th</sup>. There are only so many teeth that can be fixed in the week between Christmas and New Year's.

The holiday season brings people together. Family gatherings, vacations, and an assortment of parties bring us into contact with family and friends we may not have seen in a while. Many patients want their teeth to look their best for these social gatherings. Early November seems to be an especially popular time for teeth whitening and other cosmetic procedures. Even dentists get in on the act, as it seems Jennifer and I spend a lot more time with our bleaching trays in our mouths this time of year. Not that my hunting buddies ever notice...

Until next time, keep smiling.

-Please send comments to Drs. Parrish through [www.ParrishDental.com](http://www.ParrishDental.com).