

NTEA ENDO FAX

Compliments of North Texas Endodontic Assoc.

April 1998

*****NTEA would like to announce the addition of Dr. David Witherspoon to our practice. Dr. Witherspoon is a present faculty member at Baylor College of Dentistry. Dr. Witherspoon received his Bachelor of Dental Sciences in 1988 at the University of Queensland in Australia. He graduated from Baylor in 1996 with a degree in Endodontics and received his Master of Science in 1997 from Baylor. We are excited to have Dr. Witherspoon joining NTEA and feel certain that you will continue to be pleased with the future service we provide.*****

Sinus Tracts - An Aid in Clinical Diagnosis

SINUS TRACT - a channel leading from an enclosed area of inflammation to an epithelial surface. The opening (or stoma) may be intraoral or extraoral and represents an orifice through which pus is discharged (as stated in Glossary of Contemporary Terminology for Endodontics, fifth edition, 1994).

The accepted dental term is SINUS TRACT STOMA, not fistula. A fistula is a pathological passageway or communication from an abscess cavity usually between two *internal organs* (i.e. bronchocutaneous or arteriovenous fistula).

ETIOLOGY: A dentoalveolar, sinus tract usually develops as a route of drainage from a periapical inflammatory lesion and follows a path of least resistance through bone, periosteum, and mucosa., Formation of a patient sinus tract may be preceded by a subperiosteal abscess with eventual drainage of the inflammatory exudate through the stoma of a sinus tract.

CLINICAL AID: The stomas are usually in close proximity to their source of drainage, although at times, the tract may be some distance from the source. Therefore, **when present, they should always be traced radiographically** to aid in determining the source of the pathologic process (a small fresh gutta-percha cone is an ideal tracer).

SYMPTOMATOLOGY: as long as a sinus tract remains patent, clinical symptoms are usually minimal or nonexistent. The tooth in question may not be sensitive to percussion and palpation, but the patient will usually relate a prior incident of discomfort. If the sinus tract becomes blocked, then symptoms may arise.

TREATMENT: Sinus tracts require no special treatment. If the sinus tract does not heal after endodontic therapy, evaluation for further treatment is required.

FLASH!

All gutta percha cones are date coded at time of manufacture, and should be used within eighteen months. The cones can be maintained in the freshest state by refrigeration or freezing during storage. A good test for freshness is to stretch a gutta percha cone to determine plasticity; if the cone breaks without stretching it is probably too brittle to be used. Unused gutta percha cones can be returned for credit with most dealers within twelve months of purchase.

Endo Fax is produced by North Texas Endodontic Associates, Drs. Gary Harris and Joel Samll, and is intended to aid the practitioner in the management of endodontic conditions. Practitioners must always use their own best professional judgement. We neither expressly or implicitly warrant any positive results associated with this material.