

1 **Salvador Gaytan:** Welcome to SmileTalk, an entertaining and informative dental talk
2 show, featuring the latest news and developments in dentistry. I'm
3 Salvador Gaytan, and I'm here with Dr. John Chao, the friendly
4 dentist, founder of Alhambra Dental and creator of this show. How
5 are you doing today Dr. John?
6

7 **Dr. John Chao:** Wonderful. We are looking forward to a great show, and we are
8 going to answer some questions which most people have in their
9 minds regarding dentistry.
10

11 **Salvador Gaytan:** That's right. We have some people who have submitted some
12 questions and we're going to get to that during the show. But we
13 are going to start with our Rapid Fire Five questions, to add a little
14 snap, crackle, pop.
15
16 And I'm going to ask you the question Dr. John, and you're going
17 to say whether it's true or false, and then we'll come back to the
18 details on that question afterwards. Are you ready Dr. John?
19

20 **Dr. John Chao:** Okay, let it pop.
21

22 **Salvador Gaytan:** Okay, first question: Women are more prone to tooth loss during
23 pregnancy, true or false?
24

25 **Dr. John Chao:** True.
26

27 **Salvador Gaytan:** True, absolutely, okay. Question number two, sipping on juices,
28 coffees and teas during the day can be harmful to teeth, true or
29 false?
30

31 **Dr. John Chao:** True and false.
32

33 **Salvador Gaytan:** True, ah, trick question again, okay. Question number three: The
34 first toothbrush was made from camel hair, true or false?
35

36 **Dr. John Chao:** That's false.
37

38 **Salvador Gaytan:** That's false, okay, we talked about that on another show actually.
39

40 **Dr. John Chao:** Yes, that's like a pop quiz now.
41

42 **Salvador Gaytan:** That's right. Okay, now question number four: Toothbrushes
43 should be changed every three months, true or false?
44

45 **Dr. John Chao:** Believe it or not, that's recommended, it's true.
46

- 47 **Salvador Gaytan:** True, okay, and you're going to tell us why that is true. Question
48 number five: Toothbrushes don't need to be clean, because the
49 toothpaste is a disinfectant and it cleans it with every brush, true or
50 false?
51
- 52 **Dr. John Chao:** That's false.
53
- 54 **Salvador Gaytan:** That's false, okay. Yeah, I kind of thought that might have been
55 true actually. Okay, the first question Dr. John. Women are more
56 prone to tooth loss during pregnancy?
57
- 58 **Dr. John Chao:** That answer is true, because hormones are elevated during
59 pregnancy, and that creates an inflammatory process in the gums
60 that makes the gums more prone to low grade chronic infections.
61
- 62 So, it is true that as a result of pregnancy, that some women would
63 complain of losing teeth, and for the good reason that they
64 probably had gum disease already, and the elevation of the
65 hormones and the increase in the inflammation was a factor in
66 creating a more severe condition. Therefore, they notice that they
67 end up losing teeth subsequent to pregnancy.
68
- 69 **Salvador Gaytan:** Now, so if a woman who is pregnant, say it was her first child, if
70 she has healthy teeth to begin with, does she still increase risk of
71 losing teeth or having loose teeth?
72
- 73 **Dr. John Chao:** If her teeth are basically healthy and she has no gum disease to
74 begin with, then the chances of her losing teeth is not very strong.
75 There however is a higher chance of inflammation, and the
76 bleeding and the bacterial activity.
77
- 78 So, if she is not careful in maintaining her oral hygiene and her
79 oral health during pregnancy, she may end up with a case of
80 gingivitis or something more severe than that after pregnancy.
81
- 82 **Salvador Gaytan:** Interesting.
83
- 84 **Dr. John Chao:** So, the answer would be true, but you don't have to lose your teeth
85 if you keep your teeth relatively clean during pregnancy, and
86 certainly it's so important for the mother or the woman expecting
87 to be a mother, that she keep her gums healthy prior to pregnancy,
88 because it is known that one who has moderate or severe gum
89 disease before and during pregnancy, tends to be at a higher risk
90 giving birth to premature babies, and having low weight babies.
91
- 92 **Salvador Gaytan:** I see, okay, question number two.

93
94 **Dr. John Chao:** So, therefore these two conditions, low weight babies and
95 premature babies can lead to serious complications.
96
97 **Salvador Gaytan:** Okay, interesting. Okay, question number two: Sipping juices,
98 coffees and teas during the day can be harmful to teeth. That's kind
99 of a trick question, why is that?
100
101 **Dr. John Chao:** Because sipping juice excessively over a long period of time can
102 destroy enamel, because there is a lot of acid in juices, particularly
103 citric acid. Some juices are leavened with sugar. So, you're
104 actually bathing your teeth in sugar over a long period of time.
105
106 **Salvador Gaytan:** Now, when you say sipping, people might sip a drink for an hour
107 or two hours, that's what you're talking about, right?
108
109 **Dr. John Chao:** Yeah, not just gulping it down, sipping it. Now, sipping coffee or
110 tea without sugar, that's probably harmless in terms of cavities or
111 gum disease, but of course they do stain teeth. But just a pure
112 staining of the teeth does not lead to gum disease or cavities.
113
114 So, the answer is true in that sipping juices may cause a problem to
115 your teeth, but sipping coffee and tea without sugar is not a
116 problem.
117
118 **Salvador Gaytan:** I see. Okay, for those of you just tuning in, you're listening to
119 SmileTalk, I'm Salvador Gaytan here with Dr. John Chao, the
120 friendly dentist from Alhambra Dental. You can contact Dr. Chao
121 at AlhambraDental.com or 626-308-9104.
122
123 Okay, the third question Dr. John. The first toothbrush was made
124 from camel hair. That is false.
125
126 **Dr. John Chao:** False. There is nothing wrong with camel hair brush, but the first
127 toothbrushes were invented in the 1400s in China, the bristles on
128 the neck of the Wild Siberian Boar.
129
130 **Salvador Gaytan:** I see, so not camel hair, it's the wild Siberian Boar.
131
132 **Dr. John Chao:** Yeah, for many years wild Siberian Boars were the victims,
133 because they were the sources of toothbrushes.
134
135 **Salvador Gaytan:** But they don't make toothbrushes out of Siberian Boar huskers
136 now, do they?
137
138 **Dr. John Chao:** Now, they make it out of nylon now.

139
140 *Salvador Gaytan:* Nylon?
141
142 *Dr. John Chao:* Yeah.
143
144 *Salvador Gaytan:* Okay, question number four. Toothbrushes should be changed
145 every three months; that is true.
146
147 *Dr. John Chao:* That is actually true. It's recommended by the American Dental
148 Association, because toothbrushes do get worn down if you use it
149 properly. If you don't use it at all, maybe it can last six months or
150 longer than that. But you should change it around that time.
151
152 *Salvador Gaytan:* Well now, see most people think now times are tough. Now,
153 you're telling me that a person should buy a new toothbrush every
154 three months, no matter what?
155
156 *Dr. John Chao:* Chances are, by that time, it's frizzled and worn, it's not effective.
157 So, the price of a toothbrush compared to getting cavities would be
158 a worthwhile cost.
159
160 *Salvador Gaytan:* I see, okay. Question number five, also related to toothbrushes:
161 Toothbrushes don't need to be clean, because the toothpaste is a
162 disinfectant, and it cleans it with every brush. And that is false.
163
164 *Dr. John Chao:* Yeah, it's false, because unfortunately food particles do get stuck
165 in the bristles of the toothbrush. So, the proper technique would be,
166 once you have brushed your teeth, slap the handle off the
167 toothbrush against the corner of the sink, and that will knock out
168 whatever particles there are, and then be sure to rinse your
169 toothbrush to keep it clean.
170
171 *Salvador Gaytan:* I see. Now, should a person disinfect their toothbrush with a
172 mouthwash or soap or do they need to do that?
173
174 *Dr. John Chao:* It's a good idea to at least rinse it well, but if you want to put some
175 mouthwash on it, it's certainly okay. There are electric
176 toothbrushes that come with an ultraviolet sterilizer. So, if that's
177 available, fine, go ahead and use it. But I think cleaning it off
178 really well, and rinsing it really well would do the job.
179
180 *Salvador Gaytan:* Okay, okay. Now, we're going in probably not this segment, but
181 maybe the next segment, we can get into -- because I know a lot of
182 people have questions about toothbrushes, electric toothbrushes,
183 regular toothbrushes or what the differences are, if they really

184 work. So, maybe the next segment, we can get into that for the
185 people.
186
187 **Dr. John Chao:** We'll certainly consider doing that at the next segment. If not, then
188 the following one.
189
190 **Salvador Gaytan:** Okay, excellent, excellent. Now, we want to get into something
191 that I know a lot of people have questions about, and that is
192 insurances. Now, there are certain insurance plans, dental
193 insurance plans that some people have through their employer,
194 maybe they have individually.
195
196 But you know a lot about those, the ins and outs of those, and what
197 they offer. Now, just to start out with, what is a dental insurance
198 plan?
199
200 **Dr. John Chao:** Actually Sal, there is no such thing as dental insurance. No dental
201 plan, no companies ever call themselves a dental insurance plan.
202 There are many insurance companies that call themselves medical
203 insurance companies, and they offer medical insurance policies.
204
205 But no dental entities available actually will ensure a person
206 against bad dental health. There are always limits to whatever plan
207 there are. So, it is not accurate to say that someone has insurance.
208
209 **Salvador Gaytan:** Because like in a medical plan that people have, a health insurance
210 plan, they pay a premium, and they have limits, but medical
211 insurances cover a lot of things. But a dental insurance plan is
212 based a lot on the premium that someone pays, isn't it?
213
214 **Dr. John Chao:** Yeah, I would say, Sal, it's called a dental plan. It's very common
215 for people to say a dental insurance plan, even doctors are caught
216 doing that. But just from usage, many, many years ago you could
217 call a dental plan insurance when they first got started in the 60s.
218
219 At that time, it covered quite a bit, so you could legitimately call
220 that a dental insurance plan, but over the years, the benefits have
221 remained the same.
222
223 So, it is no longer an insurance plan, rather it is a list of dental
224 benefits, and it covers a percentage of some of the most common
225 procedures.
226
227 So, it is limited in scope, so it does not insure against any dental
228 disease or illness, but it helps certainly to defray the cost of dental

229 treatment. So, in that sense, it is a good thing for people to have a
230 dental plan.
231

232 **Salvador Gaytan:** Okay, and there are like a few follow up questions on that. For
233 those just tuning in, you're listening to SmileTalk with Dr. John,
234 the friendly dentist, and you can reach him at AlhambraDental.com
235 and submit any questions or perhaps you might want to schedule
236 an appointment with the friendly doctor.
237

238 **Dr. John Chao:** Well, this show, I'm glad to mention that, Sal, this show is actually
239 an informational show. I certainly would not turn down any
240 patients, but the purpose of this show is to disseminate dental
241 information on behalf -- and officially of course on behalf of the
242 dental community.
243

244 So, if you have a regular dentist, I want to take this opportunity to
245 encourage you to see your dentist regularly, and certainly keep up
246 with your dental health.
247

248 If you have special questions that bothers you, you haven't had the
249 chance to talk to your own dentist about it, please feel free to
250 contact us at AlhambraDental.com or call us directly if you wish to
251 do that.
252

253 **Salvador Gaytan:** Excellent, excellent, I know a lot of people travel a long way.
254 Yeah, people traveling by car and plane sometimes to see you,
255 isn't that right?
256

257 **Dr. John Chao:** I've been fortunate to be able to attract patients for reasons I don't
258 know, from far away. So, I'm happy about that, but that is not a
259 totally unusual phenomenon for a lot of the dentists, because
260 people don't want to change dentists.
261

262 Once they are attached to one or get used to one, they are willing
263 to drive long ways to go to their dentist. So, it is a sign of a
264 conscientious dentist that the patients want to come to you from far
265 away.
266

267 **Salvador Gaytan:** Well, a lot of times though -- because you do obviously basic
268 dentistry, but you do a lot of complicated dentistry as well, and
269 that's why a lot of people actually will travel to see you, isn't that?
270

271 **Dr. John Chao:** That's true. I have some procedures that I do, that is not commonly
272 done. So, I do attract certain patients from far away. They are
273 willing to come to me for those services.
274

275 **Salvador Gaytan:** Excellent, excellent. Okay now, getting back to our topic of
276 insurance premiums. Now, there is a term that they use in a lot of
277 these coverages, that you were talking to me about. Usual and
278 customary, now what does that mean in a dental plan?
279

280 **Dr. John Chao:** That has been very, very misused. Usual and customary fees is not
281 what it really means. In the 60s, when the insurance companies
282 started with dental plans, at that time the plans covered a
283 substantial amount.
284
285 They were actually usual and customary based on the fees at that
286 time. But the fees have remained the same, but they still call it
287 usual and customary. Even though the actual fees have increased
288 since the 60s, much lower than what's usual and customary, but
289 that term has stuck.
290

291 **Salvador Gaytan:** So, in other words, the benefits, the dollar amounts have not really
292 gone up much in regards to the amount of services that are
293 covered?
294

295 **Dr. John Chao:** Not in general. For instance, the maximum {per} plan per year is
296 about \$1000 to \$2000.
297

298 **Salvador Gaytan:** So, that's the benefit that somebody can get in services, about a
299 \$1000 to \$2000 a year?
300

301 **Dr. John Chao:** A year maximum, and that has to remain the same since the 60s.
302 So, therefore the amount that is covered per procedure has gone
303 down, but nevertheless some plans continue to use this word, usual
304 and customary to describe the coverage.
305
306 The surprise to the patient would be that when they get to the
307 dental office, they often find that the fee is much lower than it's
308 currently being charged by the dentist. So, there's often questions
309 that would need to be answered, as to why?
310
311 So, we want the listeners to know that there is going to be a
312 discrepancy between what you expect that your dental plan will
313 pay and what is currently being charged in a lot of the cases.
314

315 **Salvador Gaytan:** So, for someone who has \$1000 or \$2000 a year maximum
316 benefits, for example, what is \$1000 in a year roughly going to get
317 them, some cleanings, a couple of fillings, in general?
318

319 **Dr. John Chao:** Generally it may get them a set of dental x-rays, couple of
320 appointments of cleaning and some fillings, not beyond that. If

321 they need the root canal, they probably exceed -- probably in most
322 cases would exceed that amount.
323
324 Of course, they only pay a certain percentage of what is charged
325 for root canals and so on. So, I don't want to get too much into fees
326 here, but in both cases, \$1000 or \$2000 goes pretty quick if a
327 person has some special needs.
328
329 **Salvador Gaytan:** So, I mean \$1000, \$2000, that's not going to cover implants or
330 dentures or veneers, it's not going to cover those things, is it?
331
332 **Dr. John Chao:** It's going to cover a sum. It depends on what procedures are
333 needed. It may cover a sum on dentures, it may cover a lot of
334 dentures, depending on what denture needs a person has.
335
336 Implants probably will be much more expensive than what the plan
337 can cover. Most plans don't cover implants yet. Some plans are
338 beginning to cover parts of that. So, things are changing a little bit
339 in the implant area.
340
341 **Salvador Gaytan:** So, would you say -- I mean how many -- do you have a lot of
342 patients that are on plans with you, or is it mostly private
343 individuals?
344
345 **Dr. John Chao:** Most of my patients are employed or self employed. They do have
346 some kind of a dental plan. So, we definitely are happy that
347 patients have those plans, and it definitely helps people to afford
348 dentistry, especially when I see a family with many children.
349
350 That definitely does help. I think it's a very good thing, but I think
351 it's also important for patients to be aware of the limits of dental
352 plans, and not allow the plan to determine the treatment for their
353 needs.
354
355 Some patients have minimum amount of needs or normal needs
356 that x-rays, cleanings and fillings will take care of. That works for
357 a lot of patients.
358
359 For other patients, they have special needs. They tend to get a lot
360 more cavities or they've neglected their teeth, and now they want
361 their teeth fixed, and they depend on just the benefits that are
362 available in their dental plan. And then they may not be doing the
363 right thing for themselves in the long run.
364

365 **Salvador Gaytan:** I see. And for those tuning in, you're listening to SmileTalk with
366 Dr. John Chao, founder of Alhambra Dental, and you can reach Dr.
367 John at AlhambraDental.com.

368
369 Now, just getting back to that for a moment, I guess the dental
370 plans, they have benefits, but the main thing for people to know is
371 that there are limits. They shouldn't rely on their complete dental
372 health just on the dental plan sometimes.

373
374 **Dr. John Chao:** Yes. Let me give you an example, Sal. Most plans would limit the
375 number of dental cleanings you can get per year to only two. If you
376 have a degree of gum disease, generally you need at least three,
377 maybe four cleaning appointments per year after your gum disease
378 is treated.

379
380 Now, this is something that's universally agreed to by the dental
381 profession, and yet most dental plans would cover only two. They
382 don't say -- the plans don't tell you that that's all you should get,
383 but unfortunately the inference by the limitation of the plan is that
384 that's all the patient needs.

385
386 So, it will be a mistake for the patients to go along with that
387 particular limitation, because in the long run they will end up
388 having more disease conditions and severe disease conditions that
389 would cost them more if they neglected to go in as recommended
390 by the doctor.

391
392 **Salvador Gaytan:** So, now how can a patient determine how many cleanings for
393 example they really need? I mean can the dentist tell them, "Hey,
394 listen, you really only need to, because your plan dictates that, but
395 you really need more," I mean can they tell them that?

396
397 **Dr. John Chao:** Dentists will tell you what you really need, but unfortunately if the
398 patient says to the doctor, "I just want what the plan covers. I will
399 not pay for any more than that." Then the patient has limited the
400 alternatives that the doctor can offer, and to the detriment of the
401 patient.

402
403 So, the patient should bring it up to the doctor, and tell the doctor,
404 "Look, whatever it is that I need least recommended to me, let me
405 know how much it is, and not let the plan's provisions limit my
406 treatment, because ultimately if my needs are not taken care of, it's
407 going to catch up with me."

408
409 **Salvador Gaytan:** So, the patient then would have to pay some extra to get extra
410 services?

411
412 **Dr. John Chao:** Yes, to get services which are not covered by the plan. For those
413 services of course, the patient would need to pay the entire amount
414 to get the treatment, but it's important for that discussion to at least
415 take place, because sometimes people cannot afford that, so they
416 will forego it, but at least it's understood between the patient and
417 the doctor that the patient is taking a risk and not following
418 recommended procedures.
419
420 **Salvador Gaytan:** So, would you say most of these plans happen under the employer
421 umbrella? Would you recommend plans for individuals that they
422 can just purchase on their own, or are those worth anything?
423
424 **Dr. John Chao:** I have not come across any individual plans that can provide
425 satisfactory coverage, but there could be some out there that I'm
426 not aware of. I'm not an expert in that field, but you want to read
427 the fine print.
428
429 If you buy one for yourself on individual basis, be sure you read
430 the fine print and understand what the policy will or will not do for
431 you, and be aware of what that will lead to. There could be plans
432 out there for individuals that are good, I'm not aware of any of it.
433
434 **Salvador Gaytan:** But in general, dental plans are different than medical plans in the
435 fact that you pay a little bit, not really as much as a medical plan,
436 but they are just limited in their scope per year and patients need to
437 be aware of that.
438
439 **Dr. John Chao:** Exactly. It's something good, we encourage it. It has led a lot of
440 people to seek dentistry, because they have the courage. So, I am
441 for dental plans, and you're right Sal, but the patient needs to be
442 aware that there are limits to it, and not let the limitations of the
443 plan limit the treatment that they actually need.
444
445 **Salvador Gaytan:** I see, fantastic. Well, we are coming to the conclusion of our show
446 today Dr. John, and what'd you think of today's show?
447
448 **Dr. John Chao:** Well, I think that we got some information out that patients really
449 will need to hear, because they will need to get -- they will get it
450 when they get to the dental office, but it's generally a shock
451 sometimes to find out that the dental plans don't actually cover like
452 medical plans.
453
454 So, I think we've gotten out some really good information. I am
455 glad that we had this opportunity, this is what the show is for, to
456 allow the public to understand the workings of dentistry.

457

458 **Salvador Gaytan:** And it's come to the conclusion of our show, this is SmileTalk, I'm
459 Salvador Gaytan here with Dr. John Chao, the friendly dentist from
460 Alhambra Dental, and you can contact Dr. John at
461 AlhambraDental.com or 626-308-9104. We'll talk to you next
462 week.

463

464 **Dr. John Chao:** Tune in next week. We look forward to talking to you.

465

466 [END OF AUDIO]