

All appointments filled at University Dental Center

By Cami Swanson
Of the Emerald

Students wanting an appointment during spring term at the University's Dental Center may be out of luck.

The center is so popular with students that initial exams are booked solid for all of spring term. Since opening fall term, it has seen a total of 672 students as patients.

"The initial exams filled up in the first two weeks," said Don Ausland, the center's dentist.

Dental hygienist Debra George was quick to point out that students who were unable to schedule an appointment should not give up, however, since cancellations can leave appointment openings.

The center still has time open to schedule cleaning appointments, George said. But since a student must have had an initial exam in order to set a cleaning appointment, these openings are limited to students who already have been patients of the center, she said.

Even though the appointment time available to students at the Dental Center is scarce, students do not seem to be flooding the offices of other dentists. When contacted, community dentists' offices said the limited appointment time at the University's Dental Center has had no effect on their own in-

'The initial exams filled up in the first two weeks.' — Don Ausland

flux of patients.

"(Student appointments) haven't increased at all," said Laura Lee, the receptionist for Robert Dunham's dental office. She estimated that her office sees about eight students each month.

The University's Dental Center offers three types of exams: the initial exam, emergency exams and tissue checks.

Initial exams, during which X-rays are taken and a general checkup is given, are scheduled on Mondays and Fridays from 8:30 a.m. to about 3 p.m., depending on how long the final exam lasts.

The center remains open until about 4 p.m. to deal with emergencies such as infected molars or incoming wisdom teeth. Emergency patients usually are given something to ease the pain and then are referred to another dentist to repair the tooth.

Tissue checks are a periodic "recheck" after the patient already has been seen by the dentist or dental hygienist, George explained.

On Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, from 8:30 a.m.

to about 2:30 p.m., the center is open for cleaning appointments. Because of a lack of money and equipment, the center does no reparative work such as filling cavities or root canal work.

"The Dental Center was meant to be preventive and diagnostic, not reparative," George said.

If a student's X-rays reveal a problem that cannot be dealt with at the center, the student is referred to another dentist in the area.

In addition, because of the large number of students who are trying to get appointments at the center, George said it has been referring students to other dentists for their initial exam.

If the Center attempted to do reparative work, "we'd need eight more dentists," Ausland said.

Ausland and George are assisted by Dorothy Bennett, the assistant receptionist. All three help with X-rays and cleanup.

"It's kind of a teamwork effort around here," Bennett said.

that," he added.

Next year, the center's tentative budget includes making Ausland a half-time employee and adding another part-time dental hygienist.

The center also may start doing pit-and-fissure work, in which enamel is "painted" over cracks in the teeth to prevent future decay.



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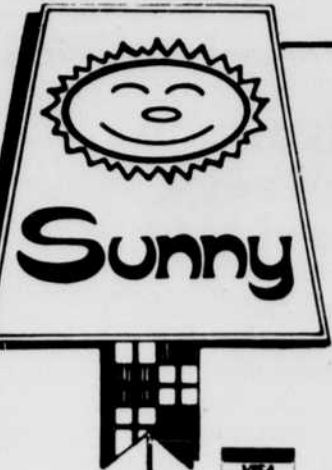
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