



# A Crowning Achievement

**Dr. Gisela Fashing**

**One of Virginia's First Women in Dentistry**

*by Greg Lilly, Lifestyle Editor*

Dr. Gisela Fashing already had earned a PhD in Entomology when she embarked on dental school. “Entomology,” she explains of her first doctorate, “is the study of insects.” Her own metamorphosis took place when she arrived in Williamsburg in 1973 with her husband who had accepted a position at the College of William and Mary. “I had always been interested in dentistry,” she says, “but I’m of the generation where women were only beginning to expand their

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horizons beyond the options of being a teacher, a secretary or a nurse. Dentistry had been on my mind, but it wasn't the thing to do when I graduated from college."

The health care field had always intrigued Dr. Fashing. However, she says she was on track to earn her doctorate in Entomology at the University of Kansas and wanted to accomplish that goal. After she earned her PhD and she and her husband moved to Williamsburg, Dr. Fashing enrolled in the Medical College of Virginia (MCV).

An exciting time for professional women, the 1970s hosted a revolution of women in the workplace and in fields traditionally occupied only by men. "I was among the first female dentists in Virginia," Dr. Fashing says. "In the dental school class ahead of me, there were three women. In our class there were nine. Now about one third of the class

**"I'm of the generation where women were only beginning to expand their horizons."**

—Dr. Gisela Fashing

is women, maybe more. And women are among the professors at MCV, so it's a totally different world."

After graduating dental school, Dr. Fashing worked for the Peninsula Health District for eleven years. "I think my background in public health led me to where I am today," she explains. "My main interest as a dentist is in treating tooth decay and periodontal disease. I've seen the ravages of tooth decay. I've seen the ultimate effect of periodontal disease, so therefore I do my best to treat them and prevent a person from reaching those end stages when the tooth is destroyed or so loose you have to extract it."

This fundamental, practical and straight-forward approach to her patient's dental health guides Dr. Fashing's advice: brushing, flossing, and reducing sugar intake. Bacteria in the mouth cause tooth decay and periodontal disease. "If you have that bacteria and if you provide it with sugary foods," she explains, "that's the recipe for problems."

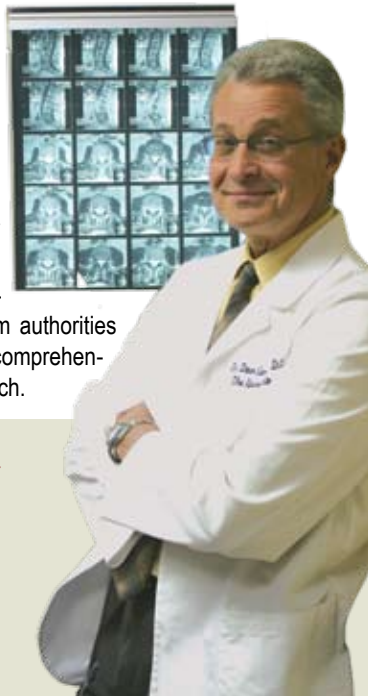
There is one more factor and it varies among each patient: the strength of a person's tooth enamel. Tooth enamel strength is impacted partly by hereditary and partly by the amount of fluoride exposed to the tooth as the enamel was being developed. This means that some people will have easy success at keeping decay at bay, while others will have a bit more work to maintain healthy teeth and gums. "People with strong enamel may eat more sugar than people with less strong enamel without damaging their teeth," Dr. Fashing says. But strong enamel alone won't ensure good dental health. "Also, brushing your teeth well twice a day and flossing once a day will help prevent cavities," she says.

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The key goal of Dr. Fashing's approach is to reduce bacteria in the mouth, those bacteria that love sugar and erode tooth enamel. "By brushing and flossing you are cutting down on the bacterial multiplication simply by mechanical means," she says. "An anti-bacterial mouthwash like Listerine® or Peridex® is a chemical means of removing the bacterial load in your mouth. You can approach it by mechanical or chemical means, and preferably, you do both."

Along with brushing and flossing, the third factor of her approach is to reduce the amount of sugar intake. "The worst things at the moment are sports drinks and soda," Dr. Fashing says. "We see a great deal of damage from both of those because people will sip soda all day long. Every twenty minutes, the amount of bacteria doubles. So within a few hours you can have quite a load of bacteria developing."

**"There is a place of contact between the teeth that can only be reached with floss."**

—Dr. Gisela Fashing

Is the answer diet soft drinks? "With diet soda," Dr. Fashing explains, "the main problem isn't the sugar, but the acidity. Sodas are very acidic, they're an acid. The acid itself is a negative impact. One of the favorite science fair projects of kids is to put a tooth into a bottle of soda and document the drastic changes in the surface of the tooth."

Sipping a soft drink, diet or not, all day long can be a problem for a person's teeth. Dr. Fashing recommends switching to water, tap water which contains fluoride. "There are a number of problems with sodas and the overconsumption accompanied with under brushing and flossing will yield tooth decay," she warns.

With the many options of brushing technology available, Dr. Fashing says whether you use a sonic, rotary or manual toothbrush is a matter of preference, but the important aspect is the amount of time you brush. "You can do a very good job with a manual tooth brush if you spend enough time," she adds. "You need to make certain that you brush all the surfaces of the teeth and especially at the gum line because that's where bacteria reside. They love to live there and just below the gum line."

Not only does bacteria cause tooth decay, it will also spark periodontal disease. Dr. Fashing describes the signs of periodontal disease as swollen, red, bleeding gums. "Usually you have about a three millimeter indentation in the gum tissue next to your tooth," she says. "In periodontal disease, the gums will swell a bit, the pockets around the tooth deepen, the bone that supports the tooth is negatively affected by these bacterial toxins and disappears, sort of moves backwards," she describes.

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“It recedes leaving the tooth without support.”

Of the big three items of dental health (brushing, flossing, reduced sugar intake), Dr. Fashing says the one that people should pay particular attention to is flossing. “I think it’s difficult for patients to floss regularly,” she says. “But it’s really the only way to reach between teeth. Teeth are very tightly arranged next to each other in an arch. A toothbrush bristle cannot get between the teeth. There is a place of contact between the teeth that can only be reached with floss. You need to do that once a day.”


Many people don’t floss or forget to floss, and as a result, they get a cavity right between the teeth. “That’s why we take x-rays,” she adds, “to find those developing cavities.”

Good habits start early. Dr. Fashing says introducing children to good dental health is easy with the right approach. “Start early,” she says. “Bring in the child to meet the dentist and staff. A fluoride varnish can be applied early to help protect the emerging teeth.” This first trip allows the child to feel comfortable at the dentist’s office, to explore the examination room, to see the chair and the equipment. As the teeth come in, she likes to see the child every six months.

“By the age of three,” she explains, “the child will receive a polishing and fluoride application. We’re looking for normal growth and development.” The staff involves the parents as well. “We teach the parents and the child how to brush,” she says. “Parents need to brush their children’s teeth until the age of nine years old because children can’t really handle the brush by themselves. They need parental guidance until they’re nine, and probably after to ensure they apply the brush to their teeth.”

Over the years, she has seen many of her patients grow up and bring in children of their own. “Children become parents, parents become grandparents,” she says. “And over the years, my patients change and so does the dental technology.” She stays informed of emerging technology and evaluates its usefulness to her practice. “I try to keep up with new techniques,” she adds. “Technology and materials have changed radically since I was trained in dental school. Every year, we get new possibilities.” Continuing education excites her and technology that makes her patients’ visits easier is of particular interest to her. “You can do a lot of things in dentistry that couldn’t be done before. Technology is marvelous.”

But even with technology, she warns, fighting bacteria with brushing, flossing, and reduced sugar intake are still the fundamental elements for good dental health. “No new technology will replace that,” she says.

Her core strategy for good dental health, focusing on the prevention of tooth decay and periodontal disease, produces strong and bright smiles on her patients. And over the years, that patient interaction is Dr. Fashing’s favorite part of her practice. “I enjoy visiting with my patients every six months. I enjoy making them look and feel good by improving their oral health.” 



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## Freshening the Indoor Air Naturally

### Caroline Powell

Aromatherapy for Greener Air in the Home

by Greg Lilly, Lifestyle Editor



Green is good. Not just the color, but the concept of eco-friendly products, processes and materials have helped all of us consider the quality of what makes up our home environment. From reusable shopping bags to bamboo flooring to low-VOC (Volatile Organic Compounds) wall paint, we're going natural. Caroline Powell is a yoga teacher and massage therapist who uses aromatherapy in all aspects of her work, life and home. She found it was a natural way to freshen the air and fabrics of her home.

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“Twenty years ago I was managing a health food store in Long Island, NY,” Caroline says. “We sold aromatherapy products, essential oils plus all kinds of natural foods and skin care.” When the brokers came into the store to resupply the products, Caroline would ask ‘What do you do with this bottle of essential oil?’ and they’d say ‘I don’t know.’ So she decided to educate herself. “Back then, there was really only one complete book on aromatherapy,” she explains. “I started reading it and began using the essential oils on myself, around the house, and even on my dog.”

Aromatherapy has been around for thousands of years. “It start-

“I started reading and began using the essential oils on myself, around the house, and even on my dog.”

—Caroline Powell

ed with the Egyptians, so that was BC,” Caroline says. “The Egyptians knew how to take an herb or flower and distill it down into a liquid. The priests were also the doctors and they did their healings and ceremonies with the essential oils.”

When the Romans ruled, they didn’t like the medical and spiritual uses of essential oils. They only cared about the practical side, the side that could be immediately experienced, so the Romans used the oils for fragrance. Then, according to Caroline, the Roman Catholic Church saw what the population was doing and viewed the essential oils as a physical pleasure. Essential oils were banned for hundreds of years.

“During the Middle Ages and the time of the plague, essential oils were used and some were found to help boost the immune system,” Caroline adds. “We know that there were a group of perfumers who doused themselves with these oils and stole valuables from the homes and bodies of the plague victims. The word got around to the King, and he brought them in for trial, but also he wanted to know how they were able to touch the people with the plague. There is now a blend of essential oil called Thieves (a cinnamon and cloves base). It’s used to help the immune system.”

Until the last 80 years or so, all fragrances were made with essential oils. “That was the only way to make them,” Caroline says. Essential oils are the ‘blood’ of a plant, giving the plant its life and aroma. When the herb is distilled, it becomes a liquid and that is the



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essential oil. "The term aromatherapy has been diluted from what it was 80 years ago," she adds. "Now science has been able to put together several hundred chemicals and duplicate an aroma. They can make a sandalwood aroma out of chemicals, they can even make aromas not found in the essential oils, for instance apple or banana. It's all done with chemicals."

For home products, Caroline warns that an 'aromatherapy' label doesn't mean it contains essential oils instead of chemicals. "The average person doesn't know what they're getting unless they read the fine print," she says. "There are two forms a scent can come from. First,

"The name brand air fresheners produce hundreds, could be thousands, of chemicals in that one bottle, and you breathe it every time you spray it in your house."

—Caroline Powell

100% natural from the earth and the terminology will read 'essential oil' and the second terminology will say either 'fragrance' or 'scent' and if it says that then it is a chemically-made product." Chemically-based products are cheaper to make and hold the scent longer, but aren't considered green or natural. For example, aromatherapy candles will almost always be made of chemical scents, according to Caroline, since essential oils will evaporate during the heat process of candle making.

This time of year, it is especially important to examine what you introduce into an airtight winter home. "The name brand air fresheners produce hundreds, could be thousands, of chemicals in that one bottle, and you breathe it every time you spray it in your house," Caroline states. "If you don't want to go that route and want the 100% natural route, you have to use the essential oils." She adds the easiest way to 'go green' is to look for air fresheners that use essential oils. She says these products are available from health food stores and some local grocery stores.

She warns that many household products can contribute to indoor air pollution, especially products that may contain bleach or ammonia. Headaches, fatigue and irritability may be caused by a home's indoor air quality. "This is low-grade chemical exposure," she adds.

Caroline offers easy ideas to use essential oils to freshen your

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*Presented by Ed Golden, President*

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home. First, choose an aroma you enjoy and sprinkle two or three drops on your vacuum's bag or filter. "It will scent the house as you vacuum," she says. "This can also be done to the central heating system's filter to scent the home continually. Those are two easy ways to get practically the whole house."

For the clothes dryer, Caroline suggests taking a washcloth, slightly damp, and adding a few drops of eucalyptus or lavender. "This is great for sheets," she adds. "Eucalyptus has been proven to kill dust mites and lavender is calming and relaxing." She points out that lavender doesn't stain, so adding a few drops to the pillow at night is convenient and helps with a sound sleep.

To create your own natural air freshener spray, Caroline suggests filling a pump spray bottle with distilled water then adding ten to twelve drops of an essential oil.

For the car, she says to take a tissue or cotton pad with basil, rosemary, peppermint or lemon (stimulating essential oil scents). "Put two drops on the cotton pad," she instructs, "and add it to the vent to freshen the car."

To decide which essential oils to use, look in an aromatherapy book to see what the scents are used for. "Aroma molecules activate different hormones and neurochemicals," Caroline explains. "Scientists have studied this and know that lavender activates the neurochemical serotonin to make melatonin for relaxation." For pain relief, many massage therapists use rosemary and marjoram.



# Q & A

## An Interview with Kathy Chambers

PRESIDENT OF WILLIAMSBURG AREA ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®

Email Kathy at [info@waarealtor.com](mailto:info@waarealtor.com)

**I recently learned that there is a difference between a REALTOR® and an agent with just a real estate license. Can you explain the difference?**

### CHAMBERS:

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An important component of this is continuing education and the protection of private property ownership.

For example, in 2009 the local Association offered 179 educational classes to our members that included such topics as Changes and Updates on Real Estate Contracts; Seller Required Disclosures; Short Sale Requirements; Ethics and Professional

Standards; Fair Housing; and approximately 62 classes on real estate law alone. This doesn't even take into account classes offered on the state and national levels.

In addition, REALTORS® feel it is our obligation to constantly stay informed about local, state and national legislative issues that might affect private property rights.

To that end, as a local association we have made the financial commitment to engage a legislative consultant whose responsibility it is to monitor real estate related legislation and to uphold private property rights particularly at our local and state levels. The General Assembly convened on the 15th of January and we are closely monitoring those bills that could either positively or adversely affect your home or business real estate.

We work in tandem with our state and national associations of REALTORS® and together we speak on behalf of private property owners. An example would be the recent extension of the first-time home owners' tax credit and the addition of exist-

ing homeowners' tax credit.

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### LOCAL MARKET UPDATE

The home sales statistics for 2009 are now available on our website: [www.waarealtor.com](http://www.waarealtor.com). The figures are both impressive and encouraging for both buyers and sellers. After a sluggish 1st and 2nd Quarter that showed sales in the negative compared to 2008, the 3rd and 4th Quarters are reflecting that our local market has stabilized and is gaining momentum with the highest percentage increase in several years showing in the 4th Quarter.

For more detailed local market statistics and general real estate information visit [www.waarealtor.com](http://www.waarealtor.com). For more information about this article or any other real estate matter, please contact your local Realtor®.

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Then there are the *feel good* aromas: orange, lemon, grapefruit, tangerine, or any of the citrus scents.

Caroline suggests consulting an aromatherapy book to explore the possibilities of essential oils in your home. "You can use the book to discover what effects the scent you like is supposed to encourage," she says. For most people, lemon and orange are happy scents that evoke pleasant sensations, but people are individuals and Caroline advises taking a few essential oils on a test run to discover what the aroma produces for you.

A second method of choosing a scent for the home is to decide what you need then look up the scents for that. For example, a soothing and restful environment might include the aroma of lavender or chamomile.

"Another category is mental stimulation

which is popular for students and workers" she suggests. "These are the stronger aromas.

Basil helps with concentration and rosemary

is good for re-  
m e m b r a n c e .

One scent that is getting a lot of attention is peppermint. Peppermint keeps you mentally alert." A home office would benefit from these scents.

Aromatherapy as a green home air and fabrics freshener is becoming more popular and today many stores stock a wide variety of essential oils. "They used to be only in health

food stores," Caroline says, "but now stores like GNC and Ukrop's have them." Try a few of these green ideas around the home and Caroline says you'll breathe easier. NDN

## AROMA EFFECTS

Lemon (and other citrus)	Energizing
Basil	Concentration
Peppermint	Alertness
Rosemary	Remembrance
Lavender	Calming
Eucalyptus	Decongestant
Jasmine	Relaxation

## Join us for Dinner at *Williamsburg's Diner!*



### Dinner Favorites

Chicken Fried Steak  
Meatloaf • Bar-B-Q  
Many More!

### Favorite Sides

- Fried Okra
- Hush Puppies
- Greek Fries & More!

# 20% Off Home Style Dinner!

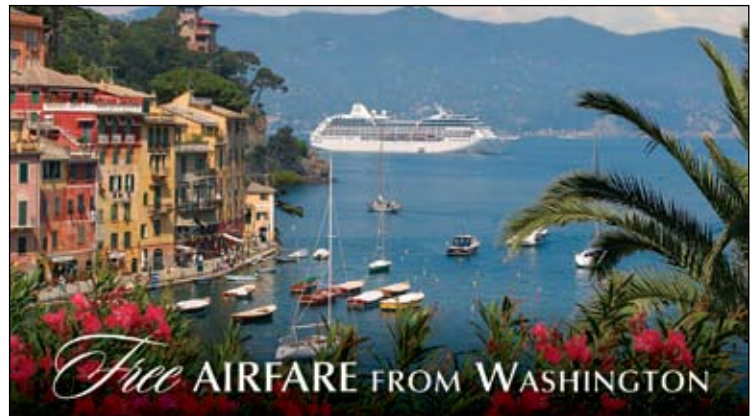
With Coupon. Good for Dinner Only. Excludes, tax, beer, wine and gratuity. Dine In Only. Coupon Expires 2/18/10.

Dinner served 5pm to 9pm, Tuesday - Saturday

## FIVE FORKS CAFE

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Breakfast Tues - Sun, 7 am to 3pm, Lunch Tues - Sat, 11am to 5pm, Sunday 11 am to 3 pm. Closed Monday



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PLEASE JOIN CRUISE HOLIDAYS OF WILLIAMSBURG  
FOR A SPECIAL OCEANIA CRUISES PRESENTATION

Tuesday, February 16<sup>th</sup> at 4:15 pm  
5108 Center Street | Williamsburg, VA

Space is limited. RSVP to (757) 258-8844 by February 8<sup>th</sup>.

SHIPBOARD CREDITS AND PRE-PAID GRATUITIES ON SELECT VOYAGES WILL BE OFFERED.



Ships' Registry, Marshall Islands