



The Dr. Samuel D. Harris
**NATIONAL
MUSEUM of
DENTISTRY**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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‘YOUR SPITTING IMAGE’ EDUCATIONAL WEB SITE REVEALS WHAT YOUR MOUTH SAYS ABOUT YOU

Interactive program explores forensics, saliva, and bioengineering in dentistry

BALTIMORE, MD (December 11, 2009)—Did you know that a person can be identified from the DNA in saliva left behind on a postage stamp? The average person creates enough saliva each day to fill a soft-drink bottle? Teeth can survive fires reaching 2012 degrees F?

[Your Spitting Image](http://www.dentalmuseum.org/ysi) (www.dentalmuseum.org/ysi), a new educational web site from the National Museum of Dentistry, reveals what your mouth says about you. Find out how forensic dentists use dental records and DNA analysis to solve real missing person cases, discover the telling secrets revealed by saliva, and find out how your mouth is a window to health for your body.

This interactive web site features an in-depth exploration of forensics, saliva, and bioengineering as it relates to science, dentistry, and oral health. Key scientific topics include DNA, genetics, the mouth/body connection and stem cells. It can be used by parents and middle- and high-school teachers for scientific exploration in the classroom or at home. The lessons can also be used in conjunction with a field trip to see the *Your Spitting Image* companion exhibit at the National Museum of Dentistry in Baltimore or at one of the venues across the country hosting [the traveling version of the exhibit](#) (currently on view at the Impression 5 Science Center in Lansing, Michigan).

The web site features three sections that explore the science of dentistry and oral health. In *Forensics: Solving Mysteries*, learn how forensic dentists help law enforcement identify missing persons using x-rays, bite marks, and DNA testing. Find out how saliva protects our teeth and how our mouth is connected to the health of the rest of our body in *Saliva: A Remarkable Fluid*.

Bioengineering: Making a New You explores how stem cells and genes are being used to grow replacement teeth and cure disease.



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Interactive activities include:

- An exploration into how a few drops of saliva can be used to determine genetic make-up, diagnose infections, and identify illegal drug use
- A step-by-step illustration of how forensic dentists can extract DNA from a tooth to learn the identify an unknown victim
- An animated cartoon that shows how brushing, flossing and rinsing leads to a healthy mouth
- A visual timeline of the various ways mankind has sought to replace missing teeth for thousands of years, from the ancient Egyptians to the future of tooth replacement.

Teacher guides included on the site provide easy-to-understand, illustrated, age-appropriate lessons for middle and high school students that can be used in the classroom. All materials are designed to meet the National Science Education Standards developed by the National Committee on Science Education Standards and Assessment and the National Research Council.

The web site also provides detailed information about the *Your Spitting Image* traveling exhibit and how it can be brought to communities nationwide.

The *Your Spitting Image* web site was made possible by a generous grant from the Patterson Dental Foundation.

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF DENTISTRY

The Dr. Samuel D. Harris National Museum of Dentistry, an Affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution, is a lively national center where visitors discover the power of a healthy smile and the rich history of dentistry. Designated by Congress as the official museum of the dental profession in the United States, the museum's collection of 40,000 objects tells the story of dentistry through changing and traveling exhibits, school tours, and family days. Highlights include George Washington's lower denture, Queen Victoria's personal dental instruments, and an extraordinary collection of toothbrushes ranging from the 1800s to the present. The National Museum of Dentistry is located at 31 S. Greene Street in Baltimore, Maryland. Admission is \$7 for adults, \$5 for seniors, and students with ID, \$3 for children age 3-19; and free for age 2 & under. Open Wednesday-Saturday 10 a.m.-4 p.m. and Sunday 1-4p.m. Closed Mondays, Tuesdays, and major holidays. Call 410/706-0600 or visit www.smile-experience.org.

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