



### **Toothprints® and Child Identification**

One of our worst fears we all have had is that our children could get lost, or worse, abducted. The Massachusetts Masonic Lodges in conjunction with the Massachusetts Dental Society and Massachusetts Association of Crime Prevention Officers has implemented the CHIP (Child Identification Program), and to date have taken videos, fingerprints and Toothprints® on over 200,000 children in the Commonwealth. The Massachusetts program is the most comprehensive program in the world.

**What is a Toothprint®?** When we place the softened thermoplastic wafer in the child's mouth and instruct them to "bite tight like a lion" we are recording the size and shape of teeth, the position of the teeth in the jaw, and the relationships of the jaws to each other. The impression is a permanent record like fingerprints, it is unique to every individual. Even identical twins have different Toothprints®. Children should have Toothprints® at age 3-4, again at age 8-9 and finally at age 11-12, if there are no fillings or other dental identifiers. The other major advantage to the impression is (1) the saliva provides cells for DNA sample, and (2) the saliva scent on the wafer can be used for scent dogs to track lost or missing children.

### **What Do We Do?**

We take the bite impression and place it in a zip lock bag with your child's name on it. Do not open the bag because it will contaminate the scent and perhaps the DNA sample. When you get home place it in a safe spot where you can remember where it is. Keep it with a recent photograph.

### **This is the FIRST step in Child Safety, but...**

. . . you should attend a CHIP program with the videos, fingerprints' and tons of EDUCATIONAL information when it is held in your community, a list of events can be found on the web at [www.mychip.org](http://www.mychip.org). Hopefully, no one will ever need any of this. We will be perfectly happy if we waste the wafer and the bag. However, if it ever makes a difference, we would be very thankful.

***Our office creates Toothprints® for our young patients  
at no additional charge, even for kids that might not  
be regular patients of the practice.  
We are pleased to offer this important service to as many  
of our young friends and neighbors as possible.***