

An Educational, Trust-Building Approach To Dental Care

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The bulk of dental care performed today is in the category of teeth repairs and replacements. Most tooth loss is due to dental decay and periodontal (gum) disease, which are entirely preventable. These conditions are often accompanied by an uneven bite, which also insults the teeth and their supporting structures, further aggravating the teeth and their supporting gums and bone. Dental technology has advanced immensely through the years offering esthetic teeth repairs and replacements, that if properly done can defy detection. Other technologies that have advanced are in the area of diagnostic assessments that are illustrating the relationship between oral and general health. Oral biofilm testing is now quantifying the oral-systemic connection, validating what in the past was only suspected. The one area of dentistry that hasn't seemed to improve is in the area of trust, as it is estimated that as many as 75% of US adults experience some degree of dental fear, from mild to severe (*Wikipedia references*). In interviewing all my new patients over a period of over 35 years, I have discovered that most dental problems they have experienced through the years are the result of what they haven't been taught, and dentistry performed piecemeal, not taking into account how all elements of the oral system need to function in harmony, i.e., teeth, gums, jaw muscles, nerves, ligaments and blood vessels. This synchrony of all oral "parts" (*or elements*) is important both in sustaining oral health and retaining one's teeth, but its influence on general health as well. My realization of the above through over 40 years of continuing research and study has led to the mission of my Dental Wellness Center that offers a holistic, or integrated view of oral health. We take the time to educate our patients about the nature of their oral system and its relationship to their general health to such a degree that they become confident in making prudent choices towards a future of oral health. The interesting upshot of this patient educational process is the development of that all-important missing element cited above - trust!