

Our First Appointment

Ask any dentist what is the most frequently missed (non-emergency) appointment, and hands down they will reply that it is the “new patient” appointment. Consequently, most all traditional dental practices either “double book” their schedule, or allow little time for this appointment. I believe that this first appointment is of enormous value, and the following are a few words directed to those who would like to become patients within our practice.

Through the years I’ve found that new patients come into our office with varying perspectives regarding dentistry, mostly based on past dental experiences and that of their family culture regarding health in general. (See “Trust” article).

I have also found that those patients who have had enduring success with my preventive and treatment recommendations have developed a sound and trusting relationship with me and my team.

My learning and teaching dental experiences have led me to understand that dental health is more about diagnosing the causes of dental problems, such as decay, gum disease, missing teeth, head and neck pain, tooth wear, etc. rather than just treating their results (which is the predominant mode of traditional dentistry). This requires a process that takes time, both for the doctor and patient learning process, so we value the time it takes to allow it to have a good beginning.

I’ve discovered that teeth, mouths and people are as different as night and day, and the most important ingredient towards a successful and healthy oral future is to set the stage for a trusting relationship. This paves the way for my patients’ learning the uniqueness of their oral system, its positives and its negatives with a plan for successful and enduring preventive and treatment options.

Consequently, I believe that it is important to do all that is possible to gain that trust with all my patients, and the best way I’ve discovered to do so is to allot enough time in the beginning to discover who that “new patient” is, their attitude towards dentistry, a careful history of their past treatment, and their desires and expectations for their dental future.

The value of this first appointment is incalculable as it is the start of a process that can reverse any negative attitudes towards dentistry and set the stage for a lifetime of oral health. It includes getting acquainted, reviewing health & medical history, a thorough clinical examination, appropriate digital radiographs, photographs, and an oral bacterial and saliva assessments. We assign two hours of uninterrupted doctor’s time for this discovery process. It also includes a second consultation appointment with a thorough written Review of Findings and Oral Health Plan, treatment options and fees. If you miss this appointment, it is empty time for the doctor, so a forty eight hour notice is required if a situation arises in which you need to re-appoint. It is our hope that you will value our time together as much as we do to allow for the start of an unfolding process that can be life-changing!