

CHANGES IN DENTISTRY ARE MAKING PATIENT ANXIETY A THING OF THE PAST

There have been many significant changes in dentistry in the last twenty years. Negative past dental experiences should no longer keep anyone from going to the dentist. The advances in materials, techniques and procedures that can treat the needs of all patients, along with new and improved anesthetics, make going to the dentist a whole new experience.

Diagnosing and treating diseases of the teeth and mouth encompasses the ability to cosmetically change what nature did not provide. Missing teeth are routinely replaced by dental implants, and through the use of bleaching and porcelain veneers, a person no longer has to be embarrassed by the appearance of their teeth.

Patients often complain that, "I wasn't numb enough when my previous dentist worked on me." An important area of change is the advancement of not only the types and effectiveness of anesthetics used, but also a variety of treatments to relax a patient during their appointment. In addition to the improved chemistry of local anesthetics, nitrous oxide can be used to relax and calm a fearful patient.

Another relatively new area of improvement is one pill sedation. It is an excellent experience for those who absolutely dread dental treatment. It is also great for patients with sensitive teeth, and for those who fear needles or have bad gag reflexes. One pill sedation can be utilized for a wide variety of dental procedures.

What has not changed in dentistry as rapidly, is the perception of dental treatment – that dentistry will always hurt. I have found that the main reason a person delays treatment is due to their fear of pain. Unfortunately, this results in many people not seeking routine dental care. Delaying treatment increases the chance for severe pain and infection; the reason the individual was avoiding regular exams and treatment in the first place. Delaying treatment could result in increased costs to correct the dental problem and also result in a longer interruption in your personal or work schedule.

Hopefully, the dental office that you choose includes methods that can relax the most fearful of patients. A caring and patient dentist and his or her dental team should take the time to address your concerns. This should begin with the first phone call you make to the office. Whether you are scheduled for emergency treatment only, a comprehensive examination, or just a consultation to speak with the dentist, you should let them know about your fears.

With routine and thorough examinations you can help prevent painful emergencies, as well as minimize the costs of dental care. Dental phobics no longer need to have fear compromise their health. As a dentist, nothing is more satisfying then to have extremely fearful patients complete a dental procedure and leave so happy because it was nothing

like they had anticipated. The end result is that going to the dentist can be approached as a new and positive experience.