

How to be a Wiser Dental Consumer



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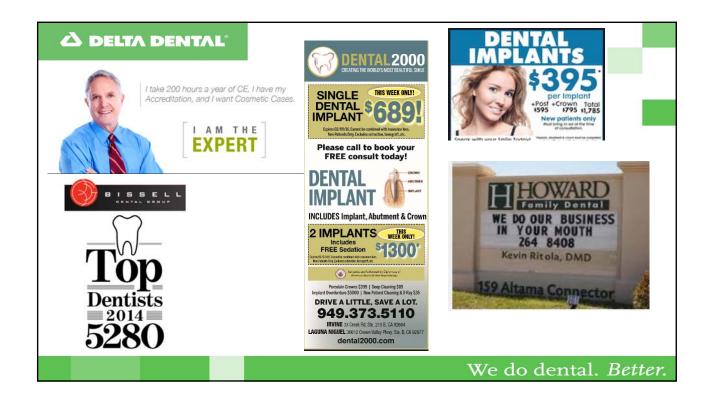
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How to choose a Dentist

- Word of Mouth
- Call a Periodontist or other Specialist in the area
- Call the local dental society

Red Flags

- Large Internet /Yellow Page Ads
- Tacky advertisements





Avoid Cyberchondria!



- · Beware of the internet
- Lurk only on reputable websites (university or legitimate academy based)
- The best source for dental advice is a dentist



How do you vet a dentist?

- · Member of organized dentistry?
 - ADA, State, Local, Specialty organizations, American College of Dentists
- Hospital Affiliations?
- · Par with Delta Dental?
- For specialists, Board Certified (Diplomates)?
- Board of Dentistry
 - · Malpractice, Misconduct, Board actions

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Types of Dental Practices

- Private practice (solo, group)
- DSO, DMO (Franchise Dentistry)
- FQHC (federally qualified health clinic)
- University based clinic (dental school)



GP vs. Specialist

ADA Recognized Specialties:

Endodontics (Root canals)

Pediatric Dentistry (Children)

Periodontics (Diseases of the gums, oral medicine, implants)

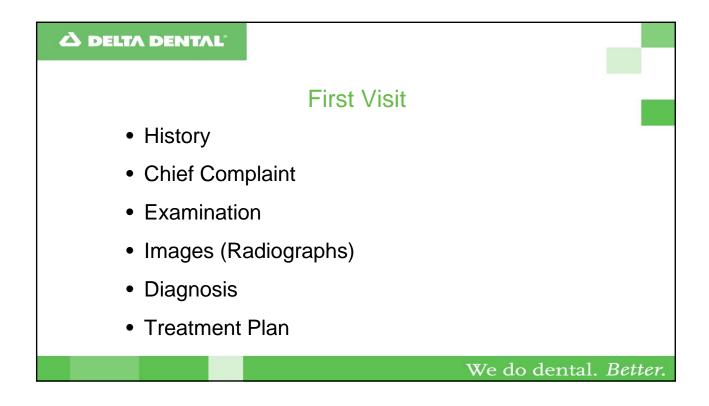
Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery (Extractions, oral medicine, implants)

Orthodontics (Braces)

Maxillofacial Radiology (Imaging and interpretation)

Prosthodontics (Comprehensive dental / orofacial reconstructions)

Sizing up the dentist • What are your expectations? • Episodic vs Wellness treatment We do dental. Better.





Treatment Recommendations

• Essential Care vs Optimal Care





- Options
- Consequences of Treatment vs no Treatment

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Treatment Recommendations

- Will specialists be used? Why? Why not?
- How many procedures has the DDS performed?
- What are the complications?
- How will the complications be managed?



Financial Arrangements

Clear Communications about costs

As a consumer, you do not know the costs of doing dental treatment

Most new patients have not kept up with the costs of Dental care

Cost of procedure vs out of pocket costs

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Patient Comfort

- Good technique
- Nitrous Oxide gas / Local Anesthetic
- Oral Sedation
- Conscious Sedation

Red Flags

- Questionable advertisements / claims
- Treatment planning the insurance vs the patient
- Emphasis on procedures rather than health
- Emphasis on selling cosmetics
- The "we can do it all" mentality (Superdentist)

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Selling pressure

"You have a problem that only I can fix and it has to be done right now or bad things will happen and it will cost more later".

Dental problems

- Cavities (Caries)
- Gum Disease (Periodontal Disease)
- Fractured teeth
- Pathologic Conditions (CA, cysts, tumors, dermatologic conditions, TMD)
- Cosmetics

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Common Procedures

- Radiographs
- Fillings
- Crowns / Bridge
- Implants
- Periodontal (Gum) Treatment

Radiographs

- What type of image?
 - FMR, PA, BW, PAN, CBCT
- How often?
 - Should be individualized based upon past disease experience
- What are you looking for?
- Red flag words: "Routine" or "insurance covers it"

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Fillings

- New Cavity or failing restoration
- Amalgam (silver) or Composite (white)



• Red flag words: "old restoration", "mercury fillings"





Crowns / Bridges

 Crowns (caps) are metal or ceramic restorations which cover the tooth. Used when there is significant loss of tooth structure.





Bridges replace missing teeth

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Implants

 An artificial root used to support a crown, a bridge or a removable prosthesis to replace missing teeth







Periodontal (gum) Treatment



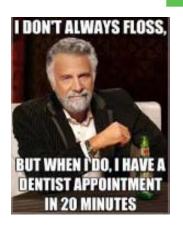
- Oral Hygiene Instruction
- Scaling and Root Planing (Deep cleaning)
- Surgical Therapy
- Red flag words: LASER, Antibiotic injection, Irrigation

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How to be a good dental patient

- Pay attention / ask questions
- Show up for your appointments, on time
- Be familiar with financial policies and costs. Understand <u>your</u> insurance benefit
- Follow post-operative recommendations
- Call early if there is a problem
- Take care of your teeth!



Communicate with your dentist

- We are not clairvoyant
- Dentists are there to help you
- Take responsibility for your choices

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Recourse if there is a problem

- Talk to the dentist
- Call the dental association / Peer Review
- Call the insurance company
- Call the state board of dentistry

The 3 things you must do to keep your teeth • Brush and floss daily • Visit your Dentist regularly • Mind your own business We do dental. Better.

