



The Truth about Dentistry

When I go see an auto mechanic about car problems, because I'm clueless about auto-repair I feel helpless and totally at the mercy of the mechanic. The same doesn't have to be true in dentistry, because with the internet at our disposal we have thousands of answers at our fingertips. In general an educated consumer makes explaining whatever service that is to be done much easier. For instance, it's always much easier for me to explain orthodontic (braces) procedures to a patient who has had a sibling or child with braces.

For the most part we know that a dentist is a doctor who is responsible for total oral care as it relates to the entire body. When dental specialists become involved the picture may begin to blur. Here is a list of a few that you may come into contact with:

Endodontist: dentist who perform root canal therapy (removing the pulp and nerve from the inside of a tooth when decay has gone too far for a filling). Oral surgeon: responsible for intraoral and extraoral (facial) surgery as well as extractions and implants.

Orthodontist: straightens teeth and correct bites with braces, invisalign or sometimes retainers. Pedodontist (pediatric dentist): Specializes in dental care for children.

Periodontist: responsible for gum treatment / surgery, deep cleaning (scaling and root planning) as well as extractions and implants.

In dentistry the old adage "an ounce of prevention (bi- annual check-ups and cleanings) is worth a pound of cure" (root canal therapy, extractions...) is paramount. As an orthodontist it always saddens me when I do a consultation for a young person and discover multiple missing (permanent) teeth. The most common explanation that I get is, "I was always afraid of the dentist so by the time the pain (tooth ache) became so

unbearable that it drove me to the office itself, it was too late I had to get it pulled.”

Don't let pain be your only motivation to go see the dentist. If caught early enough a tooth ache can be treated by a simple filling or root canal and crown (cap) as opposed to getting them pulled. Many of us think that as we get old, hair begins to gray, skin begins to wrinkle and we begin to lose our teeth. For teeth this shouldn't be the case. We should keep our teeth for a lifetime and the biggest key to that is flossing correctly. As of today, THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTION FOR FLOSSING! There are plenty of cute devices that can assist but no substitution.

Brushing is also essential. Please, please, please only brush with soft bristle toothbrushes and do not use abrasives on the teeth such as baking soda. Reason being that enamel is the hard white covering of teeth and beneath enamel is dentin which is yellow; if the enamel is worn away, over the years the teeth will begin to turn yellow as well as become sensitive.

When should I have my child evaluated for braces? I recommend that children receive an orthodontic consult after he/she gets their adult incisors (the 4 big front teeth) which usually comes at about 7-8 years old. Although not all children need braces at this early age. In many cases young children have problems with their bites, protrusive incisors or other problems that can easily be corrected as a child but may require extractions or surgery as an adolescent or adult. Most orthodontic consultations are free, an opinion won't hurt.

Feel free to contact us for a referral to any type of dentist.

National Orthodontics

Dr. J. Jason Thomas

Camp Creek (404) 344-SMYL (7695)

Stonecrest (770) 484-SMILE (7645)