

Seven Things You Must Know Before Choosing a Dentist!

By the end of this report, you'll know exactly what Dr. Michael Wong, a San Mateo dentist, would ask before choosing a dentist.

When I told my young nephew I couldn't see him last weekend because I was going to the dentist for a consultation he asked, "Why don't you check your own teeth, you're a dentist!" I chuckled and after explaining it was impossible for me to work inside my own mouth I set a new date with him.

As I drove to my appointment I thought about what he had said. He was right, it's awkward for many of us, myself included, to think where a physician goes when he needs treatment. Or a beautician for a haircut, a chiropractor for back pains, or a dentist for dental work.

Our common impulse is to think a doctor never gets sick, a chiropractor never has an achy back, or a dentist always has perfect teeth. However, we're in need of care no less than our friends and neighbors.

"What does your physician do when he's not feeling well?"

I'd like to know what my doctor does when he's sick. I'm willing to bet he knows how to get rid of the flu faster than I do. I'm betting he even knows the symptoms of a soar throat before it hits. After all, he's the specialist and rightly knows what to do and where to go.

Like my friendly physician, I have an advantage when needing a dentist — I know exactly what to do and where to go. I don't say that to brag, or sell my knowledge. In fact, I'm about to give it to you for free. I say it to help you from making the wrong dental decision that could cost you a lot of money, pain and frustration.

As a dentist in San Mateo for several years I've found that more than 80% of people fear the dentist to some extent. Some a lot more than others. Now, I know you're thinking, "I could have told you that doc."

But before you question the title of my special report, allow me to explain.

**Secrecy harbors worry and fear ...
information and education promotes confidence and courage.**

When we're well informed of what's ahead, we usually charge ahead with the courageous mindset of "Okay, let's get this done." As a dentist I know exactly what I want with my teeth and how to get it. And I got exactly that when I decided to have my mouth worked on.

What you're about to read are the 7 questions I ask my dentist before undergoing any procedure. I encourage you to read them carefully and use them before undergoing any

dental procedures in the future. They greatly aided me in my decision and put me at ease. I know they will make a huge difference for you!

Here are the 7 simple questions I always ask my dentist:

1. How much pain will I experience?

Who doesn't think about this when they go to the dentist? I won't kid you, I even get the thought in the back of my head sometimes. That's why I ask the question.

No matter what the kids at school told you, dentists don't intentionally create pain. In fact, we actively search out new and innovative procedures to eliminate ALL pain. Through technological advances, the needle and drill (people's greatest fears) are being pushed out of dental offices.

However, I still encourage you to ask your doctor about the pain. For your comfort during the procedure you may be medicated to not feel a thing, but afterwards it's a different story. By asking, you'll have a heads-up and your doctor will have some excellent tips on how to avoid the "after-pain."

If nothing else, to simply to hear "There'll be little, if any pain at all," will ease your concerns.

2. What options do I have to take a nap through the procedure?

I remember going to the dentist as a kid and having to wear a large mask, making me sleepy before undergoing a simple procedure like a filling. As comfort has become more and more a concern for dentists, amazing technology has evolved. Sedation Dentistry is highly demanded and used in some select and trained dental practices, ours being one of them.

It's very simple. By taking a small pill an hour before your appointment, you are able to comfortably snooze through your procedure. You won't feel or hear a thing. For those with a dental phobia, Sedation Dentistry has become an overnight success.

Still, Sedation Dentistry isn't the only way to go. During the consultation, your doctor should present you with several options to make you the most comfortable through the procedure. Ask him or her the pros and cons of each method. Only when you fully know about it will you be the most comfortable!

3. How much will it cost me?

I read an article by an extremely successful salesman claiming price was not the #1 motivator in buying decisions. When I read the title I laughed. "What's this guy talking about," I thought. Well, halfway through the second paragraph he had me convinced.

His argument was that we put more value on better quality items or services. As with my dental procedure, I chose to pay a little more, knowing I was getting the

better value. I wasn't about to pay bottom dollar for an "okay" job. I was going to be darn sure my shiny new teeth would stay shiny new for the rest of my life, even if it meant paying a little more.

Regardless of what the article said, I understand price is a big issue for some people. Even I price shop before making a pricey decision — we all do. The bottom line - get the best value for your dollar. Inexpensive isn't always the best route!

4. Can I finance the cost?

How many cars do you think dealers would sell if they only gave you the keys after receiving a check for the full amount? Not many! I don't know about you, but I might be riding the bus if that were the way it worked.

Few people have bottomless wallets. It wasn't long ago doctors asked for full payment at the end of an appointment. However, almost every business offering high-end services quickly found that by allowing clients to pay slowly they could offer their services to a larger, deserving audience.

The majority of dental offices, Smiles included, offer a financing plan, so it's important to ask. And when you ask, get the details. What kind of interest is involved? How fast does it need to be paid off? What happens if you pay it off before it's matured? What's the advantage of paying in full, upfront?

5. What have others said about your work and procedures?

I knew a gentleman who before shaking hands with another to begin a business deal would pay for a credit and criminal report on the person. He wanted to be absolutely and positively sure the man he was about to invest time and money into was credible and reliable.

I'm not saying you should request a credit and criminal report on your dentist, but rather, learn about him or her by asking. Visit his or her office and measure them up as well as their team.

In most situations, you'll be asked to visit the office for a no-obligation consultation before your scheduled procedure. The appointment allows you and the doctor to become acquainted and it gives them the opportunity to evaluate your circumstance. This is an excellent time for you to ask your questions. Most likely they'll have a file of letters or "testimonials" allowing you to see what others say about them.

That leads to my next question ...

6. Who are patients of yours that I can talk to?

When introduced, no one says, "Hey, these are my flaws and negative things people say about me." It's not at all like that! If anything, it's all smiles and their latest accomplishments.

In a good dental office, or any business for that matter, complaints are quickly taken care of by fixing the problem and making it right. So, learning about a practice's "trips and falls" isn't the easiest thing to do. At your consultation you'll only hear the good and "you wouldn't believe it if you saw it" stories. Therefore, I encourage you to talk with their patients. Especially the ones who have undergone the same procedures you need!

More than anyone, their patients will be able to fairly tell you what they are like. After all, they've experienced the practice time and time again. They'd be able to tell you if the dentist is a people person. Is the dentist gentle? Were they comfortable with him? Did they follow their appointment up with continued care? Were they satisfied?

If you don't feel comfortable asking questions, simply look at the practice. My bet is that if the practice is still open and it has a constant flow of patients, people are smiling, and most importantly, you feel comfortable! The doctor is good at what he does. A report about questionable service from a dentist quickly spreads and can drastically hurt a practice.

7. How long have you been practicing?

You wouldn't ask a guy living in a cardboard box for financial advice. Instead you'd approach someone who is successful, maybe drives a nice car and has more money than you. Many of us would and should even pay him for his advice.

In the same sense, you want a dentist who is experienced and knowledgeable in their field. Learn where they went to school. When did they graduate? Did they practice under another, more experienced, doctor before taking up their own practice? How often and how many times have they treated patients like yourself?

What is their success rate?

Let's review what we've covered:

- How much pain will I experience?
- What option do I have to take a nap through the procedure?
- How much will it cost me?
- Can I finance the cost?
- What have others said about your work and this procedure?
- Who are patients of yours that I can talk to?
- How long have you been practicing? How long have you been doing this procedure?

I know many of the questions are simple and some would argue they're common sense. But, you'd be surprised how little I'm asked these questions. Remember, information and education promotes confidence and courage, and we all could use a little more of that when visiting the dentist!

For more information, contact Dr. Michael Wong at 866- wowsmile (866-969-7645) or at drwong@wowsmile.com. You can also see our smiles on the web at www.wowsmile.com.