



Optimal Oral Health

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The Comprehensive New Patient Experience

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You most likely have arrived at this web site because you are interested in learning more about a different level of dentistry for you and your family, or perhaps your dentist has referred you here to help answer questions you have regarding your dental care. The Pankey-trained dentist, who subscribes to the principles and practices of optimal care, understands your desire for the best dental services that are appropriate for your circumstances and objectives and is dedicated to helping you achieve your goals.

In order to meet this expectation, your dentist will want to get to know you as a unique individual prior to looking in your mouth. This is the initial step of a comprehensive new patient experience. By discussing your dental history and learning about your past experiences with dentistry, your dentist gains valuable insight that will allow the two of you to reach your desired outcomes.

You will have the opportunity to express what you want for yourself both functionally and esthetically, what your concerns are, and how you see your present level of oral health. Your dentist will want to know what your expectations are about the office and staff and how your past experiences affect this. In short, your Pankey-trained dentist understands that your concerns and opinions are essential to providing the level of service you expect.

The next step is a complete clinical examination. This is accomplished with your help and input. Comprehensive exams are much different than the "checkup" you might have experienced in the past. In order to reach a complete understanding of your present state of health, your dentist must gather data about your muscles, temporomandibular (jaw) joints and occlusion (bite), and how those three components work together in your mouth. Evaluating the health of the periodontium (gums) and surrounding soft tissues as well as an oral cancer screening is also part of the process. A complete assessment of the state of health of each individual tooth as well as the condition of any existing restorations or prostheses is an integral part of the process.

An esthetic evaluation may be part of the process if you have expressed concerns about the way your teeth look. Throughout this exam, your dentist will be asking you what

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you are feeling, wondering, and thinking. You, after all, know better than anyone what you feel in your own mouth.

Along with the process of examining your mouth with you, your dentist will suggest appropriate x-rays. These may include films of your teeth, entire jaw system, and if necessary, specific films of your jaw joints. Diagnostic casts will be made and mounted on an articulator, an instrument that simulates the movements of your lower jaw relative to your upper teeth.

A final step in gathering data is a complete set of clinical photographs of your teeth and face. All of this information allows your dentist to have the opportunity to study your unique circumstances and condition to then formulate a treatment plan that meets your goals and objectives.

At some point following this evaluation, you and your dentist will come together to discuss the findings and possibilities, and then outline how to best proceed. The entire process may take place over several visits. Certainly, if you have immediate concerns or an urgent need, your dentist will address the issue prior to the process just described.

It is important to emphasize that the essence of this experience is understanding your unique aspirations and expectations and learning how best to work with and for you. For those who are discriminating about their health care, this comprehensive, relationship-based approach is both reassuring and satisfying. Choosing a Pankey-trained dentist allows you the opportunity to work with a doctor who is constantly pursuing excellence in all facets of dental practice.