



The Wellness Family

Dr. Brayton Keeps You Informed

Wellness Dentistry

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services estimates 1 in 7 adults between the ages of 35 and 44 have some form of gum disease, from gingivitis to severe periodontitis. In the past several years, a proven link has been found between oral health and overall health – or wellness. With that understanding, we now have access to wellness dentistry.

What is Wellness Dentistry?

Moving beyond just simply cleaning teeth, finding and filling cavities, and other routine dentistry, the wellness dentist makes it a priority to identify potential problems and educate patients. Holistic or wellness dentistry is caring for the whole patient rather than just the patient's teeth and gums. A wellness dentist views the physical, mental and spiritual aspects as well as all outside influences that affect the patient. It's so much more than just oral hygiene, it's understanding that what is put in our mouths and the condition of our teeth and gums can have an affect on our overall health and well-being, and vice versa.

Dental Fillings and Informed Consent

Dental amalgam, typically used for fillings, has served as a dental restoration for over 170 years. It is primarily made up of 50% mercury, 30% silver and differing amounts of tin, zinc and copper. Despite the fact that mercury-free dental fillings have been in development for over 50 years, many dentists are still using amalgam and exposing their patients, their dental assistants and themselves to unhealthy mercury.

One of the most popular mercury-free options is called composite. It is environment-friendly, preserves teeth, easier to repair, durable, and, most importantly, does not expose anyone to mercury. It is estimated that more than half of all dentists are now mercury-free, understanding that just because amalgam has been used for over 170 years doesn't mean that it's the best option.

A wellness dentist is going to discuss the dangers of amalgam and offer their patients an opportunity for informed consent. Research suggests that most dental patients will agree to amalgam (since it is the least expensive and fully covered by their insurance) up to and until they are told it contains mercury. At that time, more than half of all patients will request options and even be willing to pay the difference out of pocket in order to avoid mercury exposure.

Many wellness dentists will even offer a test to determine what filling material is best for their patients based on body chemistry. One such test is called the Clifford Materials Reactivity Test. Since there are many different dental materials used for different reasons, it's important for your dentist to know what materials will be best for you. Some of those materials include direct resin filling, indirect inlay/onlay/crowns, temporary fillings, impressions and anesthetic, just to name a few.

If your body chemistry may cause you to have a response to any of these materials, it's important that your dentist knows this, and a wellness dentist will make determining this a priority.



Studies have now shown a profound link between oral health and overall health and wellness.

Fluoride

When it comes to this chemical, wellness dentists will almost always agree. The *International Academy of Oral Medicine and Toxicology* is an organization of over 800 dentists, physicians and research professionals in more than 14 countries with a mission of protecting public health that was founded in 1984. Since then, the group has continuously examined and reviewed different studies and research articles about fluoride and other dental materials and practices. In 2017, they officially released a variety of new fluoride awareness resources citing the potential for this chemical to cause adverse health outcomes.

"Ingesting synthetic fluoride, such as that added to community water, is not only ineffective at reducing tooth decay, but it also exposes our population to a number of toxins," David Kennedy, DDS, lead author of the *IAOMT Fluoride Position Paper*, cautions. "American children are already being overdosed with fluoride, as is evidenced by the increase in tooth mottling (fluorosis), which now occurs to some degree in a majority of our youth. The National Research Council determined that many individuals are exceptionally vulnerable to the toxic effects of fluoride. When will people realize that scientific research offers grave warnings about fluoride? Don't we all deserve safe water?"

Other Chemicals

While probably the most obvious, fluoride is not the only chemical to be aware of when researching oral products. For instance, triclosan is an antibacterial and antimicrobial chemical that the FDA banned from use in antibacterial soaps in 2018, though still found in Colgate Total.

Studies have shown that triclosan may affect gut bacteria but toxicologists at Colgate-Palmolive, makers of Colgate Total toothpaste, refuse to accept the results claiming fundamental flaws in the study's methodology. However, considering that Colgate Total is the only toothpaste still using triclosan, that fact should be taken into consideration.

Oral Flora

While mouthwashes may seem beneficial for all the reasons touted in their commercials (eliminating tarter causing bacteria, helping reduce tarter buildup and helping keep the mouth smelling fresh), the truth is that studies suggest anti-bacterial mouthwashes could be killing the helpful microbes which live in the mouth and protect against obesity and diabetes. Since the antibacterial ingredients in mouthwash are not selective, they kill off all oral bacteria, not just the bad.

Kaumudi Joshipura, professor of epidemiology at Harvard School of Public Health, said that helpful bacteria in the mouth can protect against diabetes and obesity. Microbes in the mouth actually help the body produce nitric oxide, which maintains insulin levels by regulating the metabolism, balancing energy and keeping blood sugar levels in check.

Making Healthier Choices

Since studies have now shown a profound link between oral health and overall health and wellness, it's clearly

important to be making informed choices regarding oral hygiene products.

The first step will be to read labels. Just like when consuming packaged foods, if there is an ingredient that is difficult to read or pronounce, it's probably best to avoid it. Another smart step is to look for products with the word "natural" on the label. Tom's of Maine, Burt's Bees and Dr. Ken's Natural all make oral hygiene products with natural ingredients.

Taking the time to do a little research is also wise. The Environmental Working Group has a website (ewg.org) where you can easily research products prior to purchase. Understand first that the grades they give products are based more on how they affect our environment than our actual health, but a product with a low environmental score is probably something to avoid.

Finding Wellness Dentists

When researching dentists, you'll need to ask several questions to determine their stance on certain important aspects of wellness dentistry; the first being, are they mercury-free? This is probably the biggest sign that a dentist is wellness or holistic. The second is to ensure that they have steps in place to protect the patient when removing amalgam fillings. Ask about their safety measures and be sure they make it a priority. Finally, they must be able to take the time to help you determine the best and safest materials for replacements.

Finding the right wellness dentist for you and your family may take a bit of time. Don't just go to the nearest one or the first one with an available appointment. Take the time to research and find a dentist that will recognize how important your oral health is to your overall health and wellness.



*Dear Patient,
Dr. Brayton is dedicated to providing you with the absolute best in family wellness care. So take a moment today to discuss with your Family Wellness Chiropractor any concerns you may have regarding your family's overall health and wellness.*

This newsletter is provided to you by:

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