

A New Year's resolution is something that goes in one year and out the other. ~Author Unknown



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What to Look for in a Dentist

How did you find your first dentist? Are you still seeing your childhood dentist?

Are you happy with your present dentist? Choosing a dentist for your family or yourself is a very important decision. You need to have full confidence in their clinical abilities as a dentist, as well as the type of person they are. Additionally, the dental team and office as a whole, play important roles in your overall dental health. Unfortunately, most people are not sure what to look for when they are searching for the right dental office, or even where to start.

Here are some areas you should consider when choosing your dentist:

• Continuing Education:

Dentists NEED to stay trained and educated. Dentistry has changed drastically in the past 10 years. There are materials available that are far superior than those used in the past, however, they are extremely technique sensitive as well.

Therefore, your dentist needs to be trained on the proper techniques in using these materials. Make sure that when you are choosing your dentist to ask how much continuing education they attend, and what areas of modern dentistry they concentrate on. This is very important in determining if the dentist you choose is capable of meeting your needs.

• Modern Facilities and Technology: Technology has elevated dentistry to new levels. A dentist's office should not only be a clean and sterile environment, but should also be equipped with the latest technology in order to provide you with the best that dentistry has to offer. These latest advances may include:

1. Digital X-rays (70 per cent less radiation)
2. Intraoral cameras (allow digital viewing of your teeth)
3. Lasers (Allow early cavity detection)
4. Computerized TMJ and headache treatments

• Variety of Services:

There are numerous procedures that are provided by dentists, but not all dentists offer the same services. Whether you are looking for a specific procedure like tooth-colored fillings, same-day crowns (CEREC), root canals or just a practice to maintain your present dental health, it is important to be aware of all services your potential dental office provides. For instance, some dentists



Dentally Speaking
by
Jeffrey S. Haddad

are highly trained in cosmetic procedures like teeth whitening and porcelain veneers (thin pieces of porcelain bonded to the faces of your teeth that change the shape and color). Others provide specialized services like TMJ/headache treatment, sleep apnea appliances and dental implants.

Most patients hope to find a dental office that provides the majority of all the above-mentioned procedures, limiting referrals to other offices. Visiting a dental office's home website is a good way to help educate you on what services they are able to provide.

• Amenities: Very few people truly *enjoy* going to the dentist, therefore some dentists choose to offer services that aid in making your experience more comfortable. Some of these amenities may include:

1. Neck pillows and blankets
2. Massage chairs
3. Headphones
4. Nitrous oxide gas or oral sedation for relaxation


If these are items that you would value as a dental patient, make sure you inquire with the office you are considering and ask if they offer any of these relaxation methods.

Remember that choosing a dentist is a very important decision. Many sources can give you the information that you are looking for in order to aid you in this decision. These may include visiting websites of your potential dentist, word-of-mouth referrals, calling offices of your choice or actual visits to your possible dental office.

Once you have conducted your research and had any necessary questions or concerns answered, you should feel confident that you have chosen the right dentist.

Different people are looking for different characteristics in a dentist. Some dentists are better fits for some patients than others are. By keeping the above suggestions in mind, you should be able to find the right fit for you.

Jeffrey S. Haddad D.D.S. of Doolin Haddad of Rochester, completed his dental education at the University of Michigan in 2001. Dr. Haddad is a fellow of the prestigious Las Vegas Institute for Advanced Dental Studies. He lectures nationally on cosmetic dentistry, TMJ disorders and practice management. For more information, visit www.rochesteradvanced-dentistry.com.



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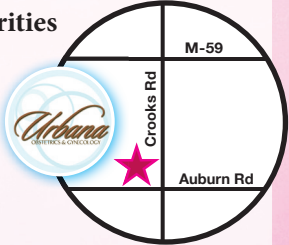
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