



TOOTHFULLY SPEAKING!

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April ushers in the return of Spring with greenery and nature's colours! It is also National Oral Health Month! To quote from the recent Kamloops Film Festival film Ernest and Celestine, "A beautiful smile begins with healthy teeth and gums". Awareness of the relationship between your oral and systemic health fills not only social media and online postings but also the traditional print media. What is sometimes lost in the "hype" of the latest and the greatest technologies and procedures is that they should be scientifically proven (ie "evidenced based research"). Dental procedures and treatments must have longevity as humans today are living longer than previous generations and we are keeping our teeth longer as well!

Here are some of the latest evidenced based techniques and procedures:

- 1) **Periodontal (gum) disease** affects at least 87% of our population and success rates for keeping your teeth are much better today using laser treatments for "pocket elimination" or "regeneration" techniques.
- 2) If you do need a **root canal**, 3-dimensional xrays and treatment under microscope are increasing success rates of keeping your tooth to well above 90%.
- 3) If a tooth is no longer viable, a simple **extraction** may not be the best answer. Up to 50% of the bone recedes within 6 weeks of an extraction. Now bone grafts to replace lost bone can compensate and give you back your normal jawline to have better implant and bridge success.
- 4) The standard of care today is to replace **missing teeth** with dental implants as the first option, followed by bridges, leaving it empty or dentures. The average bridge lasts only 7-10 years and then replacement is necessary. Bridges also irreversibly change adjacent teeth and are at high risk for recurrent cavities as it's difficult to clean the teeth supporting it.
- 5) "**esthetic dentistry**" is a sound byte often used in marketing, but recently newer research has resulted in materials that are beautiful, natural looking and behave like enamel. "Emax or zirconium" products can have long lasting and esthetic results for veneers and crowns
- 6) **Straightening teeth** for esthetics, achieving a "better bite" or relieving TMJ issues is a traditional option for kids but also many adults who have never been able to address these concerns when they were young. Today orthodontics can be done via "invisalign" - meaning without metal attachments to teeth in some cases!
- 7) **Recession** can be treated very effectively for those who are "long in the tooth." Previous techniques involving grafting from the roof of your mouth has often been a problematic and painful experience. A collagen matrix can now be used instead and has proven to be a much better and successful alternative
- 8) If **all of your teeth** have been lost - dentures can be made to snap onto implants (2-4) and allow you to eat fruits, vegetables and finally salads! In addition you can have permanent bridges fitted onto implants and this can often be done on the same day.

These represent some of the latest concepts in dental practice today, and have been designed to produce longer-lasting benefits for the patient. The first week in April is National Dental Hygienists Week and April is Oral Health month - a good excuse to come and share your questions with your dental health professional.

Evidenced based web sites: www.kamloopsperiodontist.com,
www.perio.org, www.webMD.com



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