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Cosmetic, Implant and General Dentistry

TEN CONSIDERATIONS WHEN CHOOSING YOUR DENTIST

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TEN CONSIDERATIONS WHEN CHOOSING YOUR DENTIST

1

Is the Prospective Dentist Well Trained?

Dentistry is making constant advances. Is the dentist well trained in the latest high standard of care? Is the dentist committed to lifelong learning? Read about your prospective dentist's credentials including universities attended; postdoctoral training (residencies and post-doctorate continuing education programs); active participation in national, state and local professional organizations; and participation in dental study clubs. The latter are relatively small groups of dentists and specialists, who come together to study and discuss advanced topics. Often, members of these study groups are like-minded and consult with each other on complex and interdisciplinary dental cases so their combined professional knowledge and skills enhance each other's practices.

There are 57 accredited dental schools in the United States, and they all must reach a level of excellence to become accredited. The American Dental Association's list of accredited DDS/DMD programs can be found at: <http://www.ada.org/en/coda/find-a-program/search-dental-programs/dds-dmd-programs>

Although there is no "official" dental ranking organization, every year, U.S. News and World Report publishes their list of the top ranking medical and graduate school programs.

An "unofficial" ranking system stands out because it ranks dental schools according to the reviews of dental school students reporting their experiences, average GPA, testing scores, as well as faculty to student ratio. This is <http://www.graduateprograms.com/top-dentistry-programs/>. When you do research on the Web about dental schools, you will see that some of the same schools are ranked in the "top 10" repeatedly.

Keep in mind that the dental school attended tells only part of the story. While a dentist is in practice, she or he will be required to achieve a minimum of number of continuing education hours in order to renew their state license. In my state of Florida, this minimum is 30 hours every two years.

The most eager-to-learn dentists will commonly pursue 50 or more continuing education credit hours every year. In this category, you will find dentists who have pursued residency and fellowship programs in advanced dental topics and developed expertise that is head and shoulders above the vast majority of other clinicians.

The nation's dental schools offer continuing education for dentists. Some of the best post-doctoral programs in the country are offered by private and nonprofit organizations, which are not accredited academic universities. The accreditation of these non-university programs is overseen by the [American Dental Association](#) and the [American Academy of General Dentistry](#), which themselves, also offer excellent continuing education courses and continuums of courses.

Read your prospective dentist's biographical information on the Web, and learn the breadth of this dentist's continuing education. Has the dentist developed expertise in the areas of dentistry in which you are most interested in receiving care?



CRITICAL POINTS:

- Post-graduate Training
- Study Club Learning
- Check out their website
- Read their biography

2

Is the Dentist's Office Location and Parking Convenient for You?

You'll want your new dentist to be easily accessible. Not only should the office be easy to get to, but it also should be accessible for patients with mobility problems and in a safe location where off street free parking is adjacent to the office.



3

Are Appointments Available When You Need Them?

Patients should not have to wait longer than 24 hours if an urgent dental need arises. Likewise, your dentist should be able to accommodate your scheduling needs (within reason). Some dentists offer early morning and evening hours on a limited basis. Inquire whether your dentist reserves time for emergency visits in their schedule and who covers for the practice if the dentist is away.



CRITICAL POINTS:

- Accommodate your scheduling needs
- Office reserves appointment time for emergency visits daily

4

Is the Dental Office Up to Date?

It is not uncommon for a prospective patient to drop in the office of a dentist before becoming a patient to make inquiries about the practice. This will give you an opportunity to see the office space and hopefully meet more than one team member. The office space should look neat and clean. The dental equipment should look modern and not worn. Digital x-ray technology should be used, and there should be computers in the examination and treatment rooms.

Before the advent of digital dentistry, the patient could only view her or his mouth in a mirror and could barely see what the dentist saw with the aid of a dental light, small dental mirrors, and magnifying glasses. I couldn't see a tooth enamel crack in my own mouth with a mirror, and I don't expect my patients to, either. Today, dentists make use of computer monitors next to the dental chair to show their patients magnified images inside the mouth. Digital x-rays, intra-oral cameras, computer monitors, and software applications make this all possible.



CRITICAL POINTS:

- Take an office tour
- Office should use digital technology for x-rays and photography
- Office should seem “modern”, and have computers in each operator

5

Is the Dentist and Team Members Caring?

The office staff should be curious, helpful, caring and professional from the moment you first talk to them. Once you are a patient, you should experience their consistent interest in you as a whole person, and you should experience, not only compassion, but also a high level of service. You should see familiar faces each time you visit. It never is a good sign when there is a “revolving door” of staff members. Frequent staff turn over can say a lot about the operation of the office.



CRITICAL POINTS:

- Office should seem friendly starting from your first call
- Both the dentist and staff should be gentle, caring and compassionate
- Not a good sign if there is a lot of staff turn over

6

Does the Dental Practice Meet the Highest Standards of Sterilization and Cleanliness?

The dental office should have modern equipment to sterilize instrumentation. It is not uncommon for patients to ask a dentist about their protocols to ensure patient safety. You'll want your dentist to exceed OSHA standards for safety training and techniques. Why not ask, "How often do you train your staff on sterilization and other infection control measures? How often do you test your equipment for proper function? What else do you do to make sure patients are safe from bacteria and accidental injury?" Notice if the dental team members always wear sterile gloves when handling instruments and examining you. Notice if they wear surgical masks when in close proximity to your face. They may even offer safety glasses before performing certain dental procedures.



CRITICAL POINTS:

- Modern sterilization equipment
- How often does the staff train on OSHA standards
- How often does the office test and monitor it's equipment

7

Is the Dentist on Time When You Arrive for an Appointment?

We know how busy everyone is, and the last place anyone wants to be is at the dentist. Having to wait can ruin your day. Prior to each visit your dental office should be diligent about informing you about the nature of your appointment and how long you can expect the procedure to take. It is customary to arrive a bit early. Your dental office team should be expecting you, warmly greet you by name, and inform you if there will be any delay in seating you. More than a few minutes delay should be the exception.

The best practices are careful when scheduling patients, providing adequate time for each and every patient. It should never feel like the dentist is double-booked or appears to be rushed and running around. The best offices constantly strive to improve their efficiency and scheduling practices by observing themselves, studying their delays, and problem solving as a team to make improvements.



CRITICAL POINTS:

- Office should always run on time for appointments
- Appointments should finish on time
- Does office seem rushed or disorganized

Is the Condition of Your Mouth and Dental Treatment Recommendation Well Explained?

Ideally you will feel in control and able to make good choices for yourself, based on the information provided to you. In any given dental situation, you may question a diagnosis and wonder about the recommended treatment options. As a patient, who is not a dentist, you are in the position of having to TRUST the doctor. Sometimes that doesn't feel fully comfortable. Dentists know this, and exceptional ones spend adequate time showing patients the conditions that need treatment and explaining each treatment option.

If there are multiple problems, it is desirable for the dentist to take time to think about the treatment plan before presenting it to you. Many times, there are multiple treatment options and alternatives. These should be clearly explained, as well as the relative urgency of the condition. Also, financial arrangements should be discussed and made very clear prior to any treatment being started. You should be given the opportunity to choose the dentistry that is most appropriate for you. If you need guidance to decide among options, you also want to know which options the dentist recommends for you and why.

When you do your research about a prospective dentist, be on the look out for indicators that the dentist schedules time for talking with patients and also makes statements about patient education being a priority. Ideally, you will be so fully engaged in the understanding of your own oral health that you are able to make healthy choices and know the benefits of those choices.



CRITICAL POINTS:

- Should feel comfortable discussing care with dentist
- Should feel comfortable asking questions about any recommended treatment
- Should feel well informed and confident making decisions about your care

Does the Dentist Stand Behind His or Her Dental Work?

Dentists, as a whole, want patients to feel comfortable and happy with the dental services they receive. Does the dentist promise to repair or replace any dental work that doesn't meet your expectations? There was a time that everyone really took pride in their work and their profession. But, today, bargains and quick fixes have become more the norm in once a quality oriented profession. Many dentists are quick to suggest low cost, quick fixes, instead of long lasting dentistry with a much greater value. It can be frustrating when patients have to keep restoring the same tooth over and over again. When dentists promise to stand behind their dental work for a period of time and promise predictable, long-lasting results, you can be sure they are focused on quality.

If a patient needs the services of a specialist, for example an oral surgeon, some dentists refer the patient to a local specialist who is similarly focused on quality, comfort and compassion. Many dentists today are attempting to do many of the services that expert dental specialists routinely perform. Some of these general dentists have developed a high level of competency in special services like root canals and dental implant placement, but not all general dentists have. Will your dentist be able to do everything needed as well as a specialist, or will your dentist refer you to a specialist. This varies from dentist to dentist and procedure to procedure.

Likewise, find out where a prospective dentist sends their laboratory work (like crowns and bridges). Dental laboratories are much like dental offices. Some dentists choose to work with smaller, more private laboratories, where each technician is expertly trained. Other dentists delegate, to larger, more commercial laboratories. It is becoming increasingly more common for some larger, more commercial laboratories to subcontract their work overseas. These foreign labs overseas employ technicians with unknown credentials and unregulated quality of their dental materials.

The best dentists choose to work with a finite number of certified lab technicians, whom they get to know well. They select them on the basis of their high level of expertise and develop strong relationships. This way, they can communicate fully and count on the accuracy of the work and know the quality of their materials.

Do some research about your prospective dentist, check out their website and read their reviews. Often patients who have bad experiences will likely share this information online in today's digital world.

QUALITY GUARANTEED



CRITICAL POINTS:

- Dentists should stand behind their work
- Top quality dental laboratories should be used
- Check out the prospective dentist online reputation. Read their reviews.

Does the Dentist Have a Pleasant Smile That is Healthy and Beautiful?

Let's face it; life is more enjoyable interacting with people that smile. A smile can say so much about a person's feelings and mood. Since a dental office's primary purpose is to create and maintain healthy smiles, one should expect plenty of friendly, healthy and bright smiles. Especially, from a dental team that loves what they do!

Dentists routinely make recommendations to their patients about how they can improve their smile and oral health. If you notice the dentist and even the dentist's team members are in need of dentistry, you are probably not in the office of dental professionals who want the best dentistry for themselves. What, then, will they want for you?





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About Our Office



In our office we are dedicated, we are dedicated to providing customized care to the discriminating needs of patients. Dr. Alexander offers his patients treatment options that enable them to achieve optimal oral health for their lifetime. Each patient is served on an individual basis with plenty of time for treatment and discussion of each visit. Dr. Alexander strives to create a comfortable, professional and personal doctor-patient relationship with every patient. This means that when you come to our office, you are not just a patient. You are a whole person we genuinely care about.

**We will be happy to discuss any of the points outlined in the e-book.
Just give us a call at 561-732-8877 and come take an office tour.**

TESTIMONIALS

★★★★★ **“My husband and I love this dentist!” – Christina W.**

My husband and I love this dentist! Everyone from the ladies at reception to the hygienist and the doc are all very helpful, thorough, friendly and accommodating. We can't say enough great things about this place—it makes going to the dentist simple and stress-free.

★★★★★ **“Professional. Courteous. Quality.” – Sean L”.**

I have been searching for a dentist for 5 years in the area and I was blown away by how attentive and caring the staff was. I spent less than 5 minutes in the waiting room before I was cordially invited in for my cleaning. I would recommend Dr. Alexander to anyone who appreciates A+ service!



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About Dr. Jamie J. Alexander



No matter your current state of dental health or feelings about your teeth, we are experts at helping move patients down the path to complete comfort and optimal dental health, function and esthetics. Patients come to think of us as friends. Our goal is to build long-term relationships with our patients and provide services that are customized and appropriate for each individual.



WHAT YOU CAN AVOID
WHEN CHOOSING YOUR
DENTIST WISELY!



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OFFICE HOURS

Monday – Thursday: 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Friday: 8:00 a.m. - Noon

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