

HEALTH

Will it hurt? Today's dentistry offers comfort options

By *Stephen W. Durham*

CONTRIBUTOR

Sometimes people don't address

dental problems because they foresee discomfort, even pain. We call this hesitance, and we work carefully to set it aside, because when people avoid the dentist their teeth don't get better.

Often real pain results from hesitating, because dental health is linked to a person's whole physical well-being.

The solutions keep advancing

Injections to prevent pain during dental procedures were a huge step forward in their time, and they still play an important role. Yet even the injection itself was scary for some patients. Dentists began using topical anesthetics to numb the area before the injection, and that improved the experience for many patients.

Still others remained hesitant.

Previous experiences, including childhood mishaps, often create a landscape of apprehension for the patient that is quite real, even though the apparent reasons have been overcome.

The qualified use of gas to bring a state of relaxation can be varied according to the patient's needs and this has opened the door to recovery for many people. Still others prefer sedation.

Today, patients have at their service various forms of sedation dentistry. They range from a state of relaxation, to a "twi-

light" sensation, to full sedation. One advantage of sedation dentistry is that courses of treatment that might have taken weeks or months to complete can now be done in one or two visits, with this kind of comfort support.

Providing patients a spectrum of comfort

Today's dentists have an array of options available to them to overcome patient apprehension.

For instance, our practice crafted an approach we call the spectrum of comfort. Whether a patient needs just a little reassurance or prefers to sleep through the whole visit, our practice is equipped and qualified to provide that, and everything in between.

We make those preferences as much a part of what we know about a patient as his or her dental history. Caring for hesitance is as important as any other part of a dental procedure.

Progress without pain

Many patients have memories to overcome in becoming comfortable with their dental care, and we get particular satisfaction from

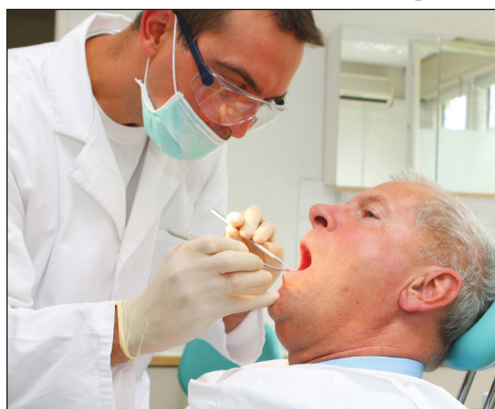
helping them with this.

From mild anxiety to real fear, we respect how our patients feel, and we support them in every way available, to empower them in their journey. That begins with making patients comfortable and it extends through earning and deserving their trust for life.

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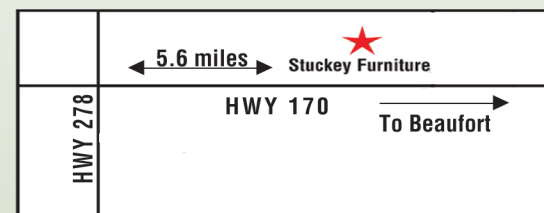
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