

Dental Decisions

3 Easy Steps to Follow When Finding A Dentist

1. **Search** with the American Dental Association for credible dentists, visit your local dental society or state board which can provide you with referrals in your community, or explore the internet for updated dental websites that seem professional and sincere (the dentist should be involved in continuing their education as well)
2. **Select** an office close to your place of residence that has convenient hours
3. **Call** in to the offices in which you are interested and ask questions like: How long has the dentist been in practice?, What does the dentist do in terms of cleanings and general dentistry?, Is the dentist gentle and good with kids?, How does the dentist handle after-hour emergencies? (when you call in, the staff should seem helpful and knowledgeable)

Items to Watch for When Acquiring a Dentist

1. Don't accept the dentist with the cheapest services you can find
2. Don't be afraid to switch dentists, even if you think the hassle of finding a new one is too great
3. Don't expect the best care to be given by the dentists seen in commercials
4. Don't use Yellow Pages or telephone and online dental referrals
5. Make sure to accept the dentist on your insurance list (most dental plans will also work with dentists not on the list, but sometimes at a reduced coverage)
6. Don't rely on your neighbor or friend for referrals to dental offices unless they have specific positive or negative information

Determining if this is the Right Dentist

Positives

- The office is clean and orderly
- The dentist and staff are skilled in both treatment and prevention of dental disorders
- They seem genuinely interested in your health and are thorough in asking questions
- They handle emergencies efficiently
- They take time to get to know you and your dental situation
- They keep an updated website with ample information
- They perform Oral Cancer screenings and Periodontal Evaluations as a part of the exam
- They provide a variety of services, and refer complicated periodontal, endodontic, and orthodontic cases to specialists
- When entering office, the staff is on schedule and greets you promptly

- The staff offers reasonable explanations for delays in appointments
- The dentist uses modern equipment and techniques
- *(Obtain a second opinion if you are not yet confident with your decision)*

Negatives

- The dentist overemphasizes the business in advertisements/ discount services (based on quantity, not quality)
- Sells dietary supplements or other vitamins
- Promises “All-in-one” treatments (one visit is all you need)
- Practices in a high-volume operation, rushing from patient to patient
- Uses outdated technology
- Does not explain treatment to patients systematically

