

Providing Comprehensive Dental Care

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Even though there have been many dramatic advances in dentistry in recent years, need-based single-tooth treatment still accounts for approximately 80% of dental cases. To some extent, this is dictated by patients' lack of interest in certain cosmetic or other elective procedures. It can also result from an unwillingness or inability to pay for multi-tooth and other, more costly procedures... especially with uninsured patients. But in a substantial number of cases, the fault lies with dentists. If your patients remain unaware of all the comprehensive dental care services your practice provides—and their benefits—how can they take greater advantage of what you have to offer?

The solution—beneficial to both you and your patients—is for you to introduce them to the concept of comprehensive care.

The Comprehensive Approach to Patient Care

For your patients, *you* are the dental expert... the authority on the subject of oral health care. If they need help, they turn to you, and if you advise them to agree to treatment, your recommendation carries a lot of weight. So if there's a dental procedure that would benefit them, shouldn't you be the one to tell them about it? That's the basic premise of comprehensive care. Implementing it involves the following:

- **Comprehensive Examination** – It's especially important to perform this all-inclusive oral health exam with new patients, but your established patients also deserve this high level of professional attention. By identifying all possible treatment options—from immediate needs to potential problems to ideal solutions—you're defining the full scope of ways you can serve your patients.
- **Comprehensive Treatment Plan** – By prioritizing needs and creating a long-term plan to review with patients, you'll have the basis for a meaningful one-to-one discussion. They'll get a clear picture of where they stand and what the treatment possibilities are, and you'll get a sense of what *their* priorities are. This plan should also include strategies for maximizing insurance utilization.
- **Periodic Treatment Presentation, Referenced to the Overall Plan** – Guided by the plan, you'll present specific treatment as needed or when the time seems right for various reasons. By referencing your recommendations to the plan, you'll be reminding patients that you're taking responsibility for their overall oral health... not just fixing problems.
- **Updates for Patients about Relevant Options** – As new technologies emerge and as you and your staff develop new skills, note which patients would (or might be affected) and acquaint them with the new options when you see them next.

By taking a comprehensive care approach to your patients, you'll be enabling them to access the best that modern dentistry has to offer... and increasing your production potential at the same time.

Author



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