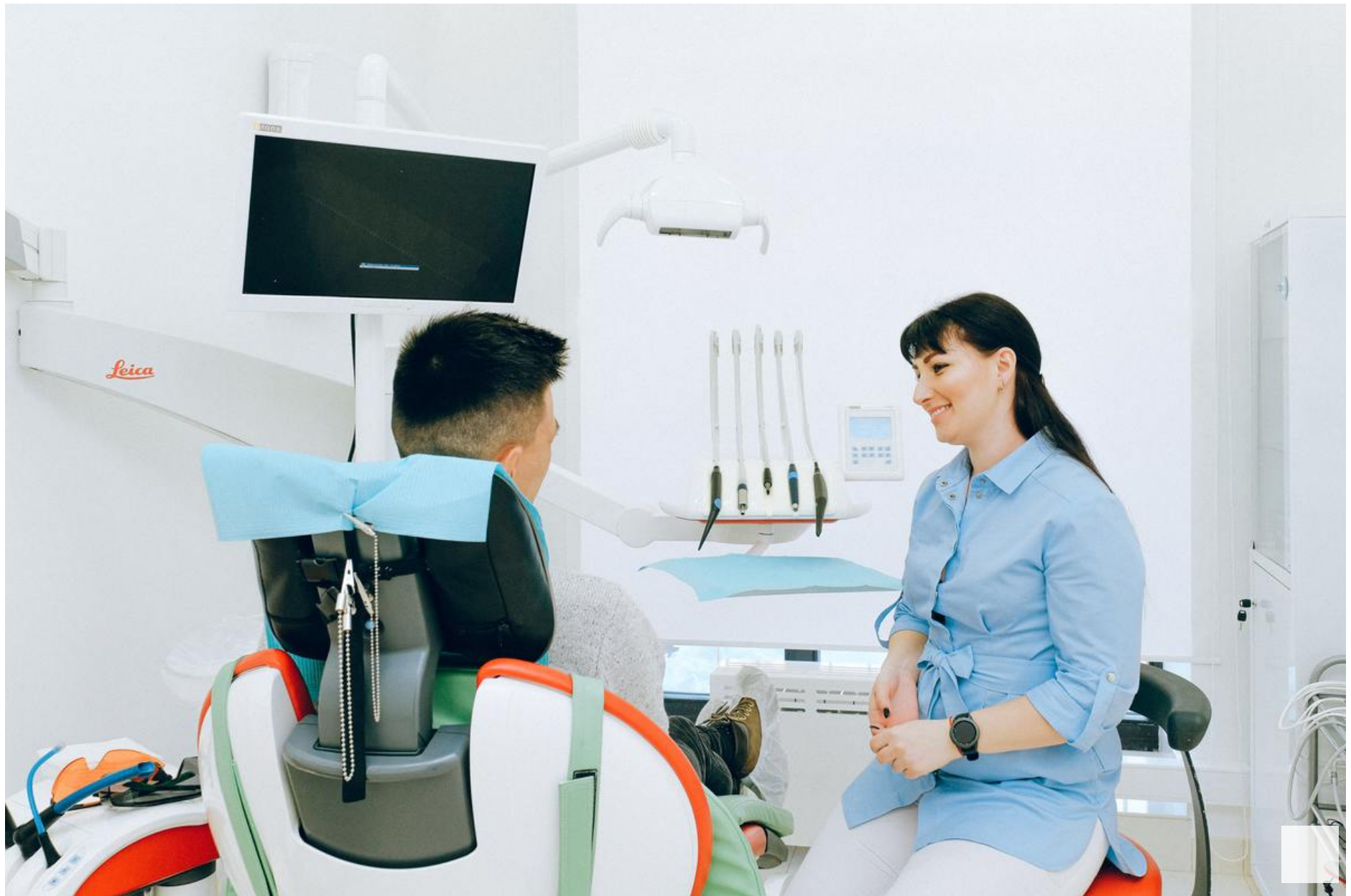




Finding A Great Periodontal Practice

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Many dentists will refer patients to a seasoned periodontist when they see signs of gum disease in their patients. And, more than likely, your regular dentist has often teamed with an area periodontist for restorative dentistry. Your regular dentist knows that the periodontist can offer more in-depth diagnostic and treatment protocols to help you save your teeth, or perhaps offer today's best solution for tooth replacement—dental implants. But what if you're making the search on your own? What are some of the steps you can take to ensure you're in the best hands?

Credentials Count

Make sure your periodontist is board-certified. National board certification from the American Board of Periodontology (ABP) means your specialist has passed tests demonstrating current knowledge regarding all phases of periodontal disease and treatment. Board certification requires re-certification every six years. Your specialist must continue to demonstrate current knowledge and competence.

Check Out Online Reviews

Google reviews are a great place to start investigating. Read actual patient feedback. See if comments reflect that everyone from the receptionist that greets you when you arrive to your periodontal hygienist, periodontist and entire periodontal team are all noted as treating patients not just clinically on point, but with compassion and the utmost respect. A 5-star rated practice should be run by a team of professionals with top credentials and experience, experts who fully understand that many patients need extra assurance in addition to top clinical care. They should take the time to make you feel like one of the family. As Theodore Roosevelt is attributed to have said, "nobody cares how much you know, until they know how much you care."

Your Safety Is Paramount

All good dental practices should be models of patient safety. Given the recent added challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, your periodontal office will hopefully have taken even more stringent efforts to ensure you of enhanced sanitation and infection control measures. Feel free to ask the practice what extra precautions they took, or are still taking, to ensure the safety of patients and their own practitioners.

Monitoring Your Overall Health

A great office should automatically confirm all the medications you are taking and have a good idea of your general health. Certain conditions, like heart valve issues, for instance, may require pre-medication. Your practice should also take your blood pressure before any procedure. Patients on blood thinners may be asked to temporarily cease taking the medication prior to periodontal surgery.

Skilled and Compassionate Hygienists

Hygienists are an important part of a periodontics practice. They're specially trained to fight and treat gum disease by removing calculus and plaque from under the gumline with specialized instruments. They help eradicate gum disease and prevent your risk of tooth loss. You will most likely alternate visits between your periodontal hygienist and a regular dental hygienist, the latter who will perform more routine dental cleanings. Timing of these visits may depend on factors including the severity of your periodontal disease.

Anesthesia Alternatives

Many patients with gum disease may have delayed treatment due to dental anxieties. Maybe their fears were caused by a bad experience from childhood, the noise of a drill or a severe gag reflex. Regardless, once they've taken the important step to address their failing teeth, they may need extra assurance in order to experience the stress-free, positive treatment they deserve. One of the ways we can do so is through safe sedation options ranging from nitrous oxide (laughing gas) and prescribed medication (oral conscious sedation) to, in very special circumstances, general anesthesia.

Choices in Payment Plans

Dental Implant surgical procedures may not be covered by your dental insurance. A flexible periodontal practice understands this and will offer interest-free or low-interest financing options. You should always be provided a detailed cost estimate before the start of any treatment plan. One caveat: Keep in mind that some of today's advertised in-and-out discount implant plans may look like great bargains. But these "deals" often can prove to be poor investments in the end when it comes to durability and overall quality. Check those reviews to see longevity of the practice and patient retention over time.

Overall Convenience

Even the most highly skilled periodontist may not do you much good if he or she is never available, or if you're limited to one practitioner with no emergency backup. Early morning hours means you may not have to take off time from work. And practices with more than one practitioner assures backup within the same practice, a group that already has your records and understands your individual situation. Lastly, making an appointment should also be a straightforward process via an easy-to-reach reception desk or online appointment scheduler.

Need Treatment? Don't Delay!

Choosing a great periodontic office is an important decision not just for your *oral* health but your *overall* health. More and more **research** is pointing to a link between the inflammation from severe gum disease (periodontitis) and other health issues like heart, lung and kidney diseases, rheumatoid arthritis, cancer and more. With today's latest technologies, like LANAP® laser treatment and Yomi robot-assisted surgery, failed or missing teeth can be more easily addressed. Find a periodontist that meets your qualifications and make that important appointment today!

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