



Jack Von Bulow, DDS

A spin class buddy of mine from Equinox Facebooked me wanting to know, “How much for a cleaning?” I’m always excited when a friend calls to visit the practice for the first time; just can’t wait to be the gracious host and treat ‘em like family...even when the health conscious lady’s a Miami Heat fan and I’m a Clippers diehard. (And yeah, even though I’m a Trojan, we couldn’t be more gracious hosts for Bruin fans too).

I quickly replied and shared our website offer for a comprehensive exam (including an intraoral camera tour, oral cancer exam, and sleep apnea screening), full mouth digital x-rays and a thorough periodontal charting and initial care or cleaning. “If you’d like, we can also provide complimentary paraffin hand care; you’re gonna love it (everyone does).”

I didn’t quite get the response I was expecting, “But I just want a cleaning.”

I explained about the standard of care for new patients and shared our practice’s goal to see patients as family. No response. I emailed again, “Hope I didn’t scare you?” No response.

Well, at least we still have the NBA and spin class.

My Equinox Facebook friend posed the question most folks know to ask in making a first appointment. She’s super fit, committed to staying healthy, and couldn’t be a nicer person...BUT... she didn’t know the shocking truth about the importance of a comprehensive exam, periodontal (gum) disease, and quality time spent with the hygienist.

Q: Why all this fuss? I just want my teeth cleaned.

Best answer I can give has to do with the way oral health impacts our health in general. Our practice mantra goes “Healthy mouth, healthy body, and healthy life.” We’re responsible for everything relating to oral health including teeth bio-mechanics, hard and soft supporting tissue, and functional concerns involving teeth alignment, muscles of mastication and the TMJ (temporomandibular joint). We’re also responsible for screening the mouth for systemic concerns and pathology such as oral cancer. The mouth is very much a window into our general health. Just having a cleaning is like maintaining the family car by only soaping down the tires.

Q: What is periodontal disease?

Periodontal disease is a bacterial infection of hard and soft tooth-supporting tissue; it’s transmissible within the mouth and between individuals. The disease is similar to systemic diseases like Diabetes and Hypertension in that it is chronic and episodic in nature and can have an insidious onset (all three diseases can actually make the others worse). Periodontal disease also carries an additional risk to heart disease, stroke, and low-weight premature births. People who manage the disease live an average of seven years longer. We’re able to monitor the disease by measuring an anatomical groove surrounding each tooth 360 degrees (Periodontal actually means “around the tooth”). An estimated 80% of Americans suffer from periodontal disease; only 50% see a dentist on a regular basis.

Q: What do dental hygienists do?

Dental hygienists are the periodontal specialists within a general practice. Hygienists treat periodontal disease non-surgically. If you’re one of the 80% of Americans with periodontal disease vulnerability, dental hygienists could become your best friends forever.

In California, in addition to traditional hand instrumentation, dental hygienists can give local anesthesia, place local antibiotics, use ultrasonic instrumentation and, in our practice (for the last 15 years), use soft tissue lasers. What’s awesome about today’s progressive approach to managing the disease is less surgery, more personalized care and support, a greater emphasis on prevention/education, transformational patient comfort experiences, and a broader vision that relates ever increasingly to general health.

Q: Do I really need x-rays?

New patients should always have x-rays unless the existing x-rays are less than a year old and there are no clinical complaints or signs and symptoms needing further investigation.

We need radiographic information to be complete and thorough. Without x-rays, we’re not able to accurately diagnose tooth decay, periodontal disease, and oral pathology. And without the necessary information, we definitely can’t provide care for you as we would for family.

Today, already minimal radiation exposure can be reduced by as much as 80% with digital x-rays. The digital approach gives instant feedback and crystal-clear definition. Patient education is enhanced by shared images viewable on a 23” screen. Digital x-rays also bring some long-awaited comfort to patients with small mouths.

Contact Info: Temple City Dental Care, 9929 E. Las Tunas Dr., Temple City **PHONE:** 626.283.5511
ONLINE: templecitydental.com