Dentistry and Your Pain

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Chronic Pain and Your Trips to the Dentist

Living with chronic pain can make dental visits unenjoyable or so rare that you find your teeth begin to suffer because of it. There are several different aspects to consider when it comes to how suffering from pain can affect the way you smile.

Talk to Your Dentist about It or Shop Around

Is your dental team insensitive to your comfort needs? Do you find that perhaps one team member is helpful but others are not? It's not a problem to let your dentist know about it, especially if you know what triggers you need to avoid. A great assistant but a rough hygienist are not a care team that is going to take care of you properly. Ask the dentist to place a note on your file that only particular team members care for you when you are there. If this doesn't work, then ask your friends or family about a different dental provider. The last thing you need is to put off dental care because the appointments are miserable. A quality comprehensive dental provider will be able to address your needs without making you feel uncomfortable asking about it.

Don't Let Your Home Hygiene Plan Fall to the Wayside

One of the biggest problems for people that battle chronic pain is a lapse in oral care at home. Pain may be one reason, but depression is another. Simply not having the desire to practice oral hygiene like you need to can let tooth decay and gum disease kick in with a full force that will cause dental pain as well as the loss of your teeth. Many anti-depressants also reduce saliva flow, making it easy to develop tooth decay. Adding a daily fluoride rinse to your routine is an absolute must.

Is It Dental Pain or Referred Pain?

It is not uncommon for patients to suffer from "toothaches" that are actually referred pain symptoms from other conditions. The pain may be due to neuromuscular pain in the area, sinus pressure, or even grinding. The last line of treatment to battle severe dental pain is performing a root canal on the tooth, but if pain still lasts after the root canal is completed, it most likely wasn't a dental cause to begin with. If sensitivity is to blame, ask your dentist to apply a desensitizing fluoride varnish that can last as long as 3 months for some patients. A prescription strength home fluoride gel can also combat sensitivity as well as deter tooth decay in weak or compromised dental enamel. Wearing a custom-fitted bite splint can reduce some types of craniofacial pain.

You Know Your Body Best

If there are certain times of the day that symptoms are worse, then schedule your dental appointments around them. Perhaps you find that you even experience periods that last for days or weeks. Knowing your body's cues can help you plan around them appropriately. If you have to re-schedule an appointment, then do it. Just be

warned that constant re-scheduling and never actually showing up for appointments can make it more difficult to be seen at the times you prefer, as these slots will be given to other patients.