

# CONSUMER'S AWARENESS GUIDE TO DENTAL CARE

**The Truth Concerning Common Misconceptions, Rip-Offs and Mistakes about Dental Care That Are Keeping You from a Healthy, Happy Smile You Can Be Proud Of**

**By:** Dr. Melba Bonelli  
Dental Choice P.C.

Read this guide and you'll discover:

- 4 Rip-Offs You Need To Know About Before Choosing A Dentist
- 6 Common Misconceptions About Dental Care
- 6 Mistakes To Avoid When Choosing A Dentist
- Which Dentist Is Right For You
- Bacteria, Fungus, And All Kinds Of Species:  
SERIOUSLY! What Is That In My Mouth?
- Why You Want A Clean And Healthy Mouth  
....The Not So Obvious
- 7 Steps To Optimum Oral Care

Provided as an educational service by:



**Dental Choice P.C.**  
Specialists in Dental Care

DR. MELBA BONELLI  
856-983-9300

Dear Patient,

Finding and choosing a reputable Dentist can be a daunting task.

Why? Because you're bombarded with misleading advertising, confusing claims and you may not know who to trust with your smile.

From super-low prices – to unqualified technicians and near-worthless methods – how do you ever find a qualified, competent, professional Dentist who truly cares more about you than making a buck?

You can start by reading this Consumer's Awareness Guide. In this fact-filled booklet, you'll discover four rip-offs, six common misconceptions and six mistakes to avoid when choosing a Dentist. We'll also share with you the seven critical steps to a fresh, clean and healthy smile.

Here at Dental Choice P.C., we strive to be a valuable resource for helping you clear away any fear and confusion related to common misconceptions about dental care so that you can make an informed decision about choosing a dentist that meets your needs and requirements.

And if you have any questions about your dental care, you're invited to call us at 856-983-9300. We've dedicated our business to educating our clients and customers by providing exceptional dental care. We are happy to help you in every way.

Sincerely,



*Dr. Melba Bonelli*  
*Dental Choice P.C.*  
Specialists in Dental Care

*DR. MELBA BONELLI*

Dr. Melba Bonelli is the owner of Dental Choice P.C.. She is licensed to practice dentistry in NJ and has been in the business of providing exceptional Dental Care for over 20 years.

At Dental Choice P.C. we are committed to helping our clients achieve the greatest level of oral health and educate them on the best dental and oral hygiene practices.

We welcome your inquiries and will gladly answer your dental care questions so don't hesitate to contact us. We don't want you as "just another client", we want you to join the Dental Choice P.C. family and build a lasting relationship aimed at improving and maintaining a smile you can be proud of.

***Dental Choice P.C.***

SPECIALISTS IN DENTAL CARE

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Are you feeling...

- You could make an informed decision about choosing a dental team that's right for you if you only knew more about what questions you should be asking during the selection process?
- Frustrated with the lack of information you get from your dentist and worried about the high price of treatment?
- Afraid that you will have to live with poor dental health because you cannot find an affordable dentist that you trust?

Rest assured that you're not alone. In fact here at Dental Choice P.C., we offer this consumer education guide to keep smart dental patients - just like you - from falling for common mistakes, believing misconceptions and being ripped off by unethical dentists.

Read this report in its entirety as it offers insights into ways to protect yourself and to help you stay completely informed of the facts and benefits of receiving dental health care and practicing good oral hygiene. We will also arm you with information that will help you not only find an honest and experienced dentist who will take care of your smile but keep you smiling for years to come.

## **4 RIP OFFS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT BEFORE CHOOSING A DENTIST**

### **RIP-OFF #1: BARGAIN DEALS AND DISCOUNTS**

To some degree, all of us are attracted by low price because we want to work within a budget. But some dentists use price as the bait for their false and misleading advertising.

Do you get giddy with excitement when you come across an outlandish bargain or discount?

Before you risk compromising your wallet and your smile, take another look at the fine details of your dental bargain. What you'll find can give you sticker shock including hidden fees and unnecessary treatment recommendations that rack up your bottom line cost not disclosed up front.

You might find that you are paying more for the so called discount deal than you would have for a full service from a reputable dentist that doesn't hide behind the small print and provides full disclosure on all fees.

If the "bargain" you're being sold sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

The sad truth is, some dentists use lowball prices as the bait for their false and misleading advertising to take advantage of your weakness. Don't fall prey to these techniques; follow these four simple steps to protect yourself:

- Ask about additional fees and extras that will be required and will increase cost.
- Verify everything that is included in the total price.
- Request a written statement to ensure that you are getting what you pay for.
- Ask for details about recommended treatments including why you need it, how it works, if there are any alternatives and what the bottom line fee will be.

Individualized dental care is not always as cheap as some unethical dentists would bait you into believing. Do your homework and don't compromise when it comes to your dental health and wellness.

### **RIP-OFF #2: BAIT AND SWITCH**

A common dental scam is to lure patients with a low-price "cleaning special" without revealing all the associated cost, only to inform you upon arrival that what you really need is a higher priced procedure that includes x-rays and a full dental exam.

What the unscrupulous dentists don't tell you in their bait and switch advertisement is that you have to have these additional procedures in order to have the dentist see you in the first place.

They hide behind the small print and don't provide you with full disclosure of the fees associated with your initial visit...all in the name of "getting you in the door".

To protect yourself:

-Be on the lookout when a "salesman like" dentist pressures you into purchasing an upgraded treatment when you repeatedly ask about an advertised special. If the dentist is reputable they will take the time to explain why they are recommending a specific treatment and what benefits you will receive so that you can make an informed decision.

- Verify that the list of services/features advertised includes any and all treatments and procedures and that they are all included in the price that was originally offered - before any upgrades.

- Look into who the Dentist is you are choosing. Investigate their rating with the Better Business Bureau and/or research the internet for any positive or negative feedback.

Yes, you can do some homework and ask questions, but if you have a bad feeling from the get-go, listen to it.

### **RIP-OFF #3: UNSUPPORTED CLAIMS AND UNNECESSARY TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS**

Remember this: the method that's best for you is the method that achieves your goal.

We've all heard the horror stories of the patient who sits in a *new* dentist's chair and finds out that they need nine fillings, a root canal and a crown...

Two things here: First, every dentist has their own style and subscribes to their own treatment beliefs, whether it's to treat beginning disease aggressively or to take a minimalist approach so as to not offend the patient.

So it's possible that a new dentist who has a laundry list of treatment recommendations is treating aggressively, what a previous dentist didn't treat aggressively enough.

My second point is where the rip-off comes in...

Unfortunately there are dental offices out there that see you as a cash-cow, charging you for unnecessary treatments. Treatments for conditions... that you don't even have!

If a dentist cannot or will not explain what your specific conditions are, show you proof with x-rays, mirrors or photos, and discuss alternatives or options with you before pressuring you into an expensive treatment or procedure, consider yourself warned...

Ultimately it's up to you to make an informed decision so it's critical to have a dental team that you can trust and that openly offers their expert advice, insight and valid options.

#### **RIP-OFF #4: DELIVERING LESS THAN PROMISED**

WARNING: Don't fool yourself into believing everything's dandy...

It doesn't matter if you are an excellent patient who climbs into the dental chair on schedule, twice a year, if your dentist is under-serving your needs. Receiving poor dental care can be just as bad as ignoring your dental needs.

Avoid a dental disaster by practicing due diligence until you find an excellent dentist that not only treats disease, but provides proven preventative measures so that you stay healthy and keep your beautiful smile.

Here are a few qualifiers to consider when seeking an experienced and reputable dentist that you can trust:

- Are they a licensed Doctor of Dental Surgery or Doctor of Dental Medicine?
- **{Optional}** Are they a board certified member of {Insert certification board you are a member of}?
- Does the entire dental team, including assistants and hygienists, have proper training, licenses and accreditations?
  - Is the office a clean, safe and stress free environment?
- Does the front office receptionist treat you with respect and keep a tight running ship that functions to the highest level?
- Do they guarantee reliable service and promote optimum health as opposed to reading you the riot act?
- Does the entire team, including the dentist, communicate effectively and courteously, giving you the full-story about treatment recommendations?

When you get down to the nitty-gritty, your dentist should be experienced, reliable, and compassionate with a highly functioning support team that makes you feel at ease!

## **6 COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT DENTAL CARE**

### **MISCONCEPTION #1: You Only Have to Go to the Dentist When You Have a Tooth Ache**

The truth is that if you wait until you're experiencing pain or discomfort before you visit a dentist, you'll find yourself whipping out your wallet to spend a larger portion of your hard earned money to treat a more serious dental condition that could have been prevented.

Don't set yourself up for a nasty surprise!

The #1 secret to a healthy mouth is disease prevention which includes regular brushing, flossing and bi-annual examinations and cleanings at a quality dental office.

Regular examinations two times a year can help detect and treat beginning signs of gum disease, loss of enamel and tooth decay (cavities) without an expensive procedure that comes along with severe or prolonged dental conditions.

### **MISCONCEPTION #2: All Dentists Are Basically the Same**

An apple's an apple right? WRONG

Have you tasted a granny smith, fuji, gala, golden delicious... Okay, you catch my drift here. Even when you're comparing apples to apples you're bound to find some differences.

It's the same when you're comparing dentists.

Every dentist you meet will have different skill levels, different treatment preferences, and different business practices.

If you have had a bad experience in the past, don't write off the value of dental care or the dream of achieving a brighter, healthier smile.

Do your homework to find a reputable, courteous dentist who will thoroughly discuss the treatment options available for your specific condition while taking into account your specific needs and requirements such as monetary concerns or anxiety.

### **MISCONCEPTION #3: Dental Care is Expensive**

The thought of visiting the dentist can be stressful for many people. By far the biggest reason I have heard, (typically from those who put off going until they're in serious trouble), is the cost.

Like any other service, there are many aspects that play a part in the cost of dentistry including having or not having insurance, treatment alternative options, availability of payment plans, among others...

But here's an unavoidable fact: Cavities and gum disease are not going to magically go away or heal themselves. By not taking more affordable preventative action towards good dental health, you are only biding your time until a serious AND expensive dental disaster faces you down the road.

To protect yourself:

- Practice good oral hygiene by brushing and flossing daily and keep up on bi-annual examinations and cleanings.
- Before allowing a dentist to treat you, be sure to have them discuss all of your options and fees and request a written quote.
- Verify that the written quote includes every treatment and procedure that you are expected to pay for including x-rays and the initial examination.
- Ask about alternative payment methods such as insurance or financing.

Bottom line - Making your dental health a priority today will be more affordable than paying the price for procrastination tomorrow!

#### **MISCONCEPTION #4: The Dentist with the Cheapest Ad is the Best Choice**

Cheaper doesn't equal better.

In fact what it may equal is one large headache and a lot more cash spent in the long run.

Here are THREE REASONS why:

1. A low price can be the bait that attracts your phone call only to be pressured into a much more expensive treatment or procedure. You should be thoroughly examined before anyone offers you additional procedures.
2. Low price often equals the bare minimum service. This means that you'll be facing a high pressure upgrade offer or sales pitch with hidden fees and extras that cost much more.
3. Low price means you may not get the quality dental care service you need to prevent disease and decay... Dental care shouldn't be a "cattle call" of clients just to get them in the door to pressure them into buying procedures or treatments they don't need.

Bottom line: No dentist can stay in business at super low prices without strong-arming you for additional sales, so beware the dental office that is advertising a price that seems too good to be true...

... it usually is.

### **MISCONCEPTION #5: Dental Procedures and Treatments are Painful**

Fear of pain is the number one reason that millions of people avoid going to the dentist.

The truth is that too many people wait until they are in agonizing pain before breaking down and dragging themselves into the dentist's chair.

And all for nothing... because majority of the time they're walking out the door feeling dramatic relief from the pain within hours, even minutes.

For the most part, the nightmare of a barbaric dentist is a thing of the past. Medicine and technology have come a long way in allowing for proper pain management that promotes nothing more than a feeling of pressure while undergoing treatment and some brief soreness afterwards. Even invasive procedures are often times pain free!

### **MISCONCEPTION #6: Dentists Lock You into Expensive, Unnecessary Treatment Plans**

While bi-annual visits are recommended to keep your oral health in tip top shape and to catch and treat any beginning stages of disease or decay, by no means does this mean a weekly or even monthly trip to the dentist's chair is required.

If you are concerned about being pressured into expensive, unnecessary treatment plans protect yourself by:

- Finding an experienced, reputable and courteous dentist that you can trust
- Having your dentist discuss all of your options and fees and follow up with a request for a written quote.
- Asking your dentist to show you what is wrong using x-rays or mirror and explain to you why recommended procedures should be done, how they will be done and if there are any viable or more affordable alternatives.

Bottom line, each patients' care should be individualized. A reputable dentist will not force high pressured up-sells for expensive treatment contracts on every patient they see, but rather offer recommended follow-up visits based on each patients particular health and dental wellness situation.

And remember, preventive care is far less expensive than dealing with the disease and decay issues that arise from not taking care of your dental health.

## **6 MISTAKES TO AVOID WHEN CHOOSING A DENTIST**

### **MISTAKE #1: Choosing a Dentist Based On Price, Location or Availability**

Remember... you get what you pay for.

Having low prices, a location that's close to home or immediate availability IS NOT the first thing you should look for in a dental office.

Your first step should always be verifying that the dentist and staff is properly trained and capable of providing superior preventative dental care and treating advanced conditions of disease and decay.

Here are some good questions to ask:

- Is the dentist licensed in your state?
- How much experience do they have and can you see referrals and testimonials from current patients?
- Does the entire dental team, including assistants and hygienists, have proper training, licenses and accreditations?
- Can you expect prompt attention from a front office receptionist that treats you with respect?
- Do they guarantee reliable service and promote optimum health as opposed to just seeing you and sending you on your way to fend for yourself?
- Does the entire team, including the dentist, demonstrate good communication skills?

Ask questions and do your homework and you will find a match that's right for you and your needs.

## **MISTAKE #2: Choosing a Dentist Based On an Uber-Low Price They Advertise**

You wouldn't jump out of an airplane relying on a discount parachute, right?

If you plan on keeping your teeth, you shouldn't trust your dental health and smile to a dentist who's only redeeming quality is a discount bargain deal!

Here are THREE REASONS why this can be disastrous:

1. You could very well be walking into the classic bait and switch scam where a shady dentist offers a super low priced special but withholds the costly fine details until after they have you in their chair.
2. Low price often equals the bare minimum care that can leave you vulnerable to disease and decay.
3. It's likely that you'll receive poor care from an inexperienced and untrained dental team.

Why fall for a cheaper than dirt advertisement that will force you to spend more for the service you really want or need when there are experienced dental teams that have your best interest in mind from the get-go?

### **MISTAKE #3: Choosing a Dentist Based on a Single Telephone Call**

Toothaches and pain can play a big part in making bad decisions; so remember this should be a business deal not an emotional encounter.

Corrupt dental teams seek out and take advantage of patients that are wracked with pain because they make easy marks who will accept any deal offered, no matter how bad, just to get the pain to stop.

You can avoid falling victim to high-pressure, fear inducing tactics by taking the following precautions:

1. Ask questions and demand clear communication from the beginning. If a dentist cannot or will not explain what your specific conditions are, show you proof with x-rays, mirrors or photos, and discuss alternatives or options with you before pressuring you into an expensive treatment or procedure, walk away and find a dentist that will.
2. Request a written quote or to see an itemized list of services with prices included before agreeing to any treatment. Practice due diligence by checking for hidden fees and extras that can potentially rack up your final bill.
3. Be sure that you are getting everything you need for the promised fee.
4. Don't let your pain overshadow the importance of your consumer rights by accepting less than you want or need.
5. Call around and meet with several dentists until you find one that you trust and who can truly meet your needs.

### **MISTAKE #4: Settling For a Dentist Who Doesn't Bestow the Courtesies That You Deserve**

Doesn't it just make sense that as a valued patient every dentist should give you the courtesy and respect you deserve?

Common courtesies are often overlooked through the initial selection process, but they're at the top of the list for complaints. Here are some do's and don'ts for choosing a dentist that promotes a positive dental experience:

#### **DON'T choose an office that:**

- Lacks open and honest communication
- Radiates chaos and confusion
- Lectures or belittles you
- Pressure you into expensive treatments

#### **DO choose a dental team that:**

- Keep you fully informed and offers experienced advice that always has your best interest in mind

- Respects your time
- Treat you with complete respect
- Take your financial limitations into consideration

### **MISTAKE #5: Choosing a Dentist without Getting the Real Scoop from Other Patients**

Too many people fall victim to low-ball prices and quick talking dental teams who exaggerate their experience and skill level. All too often, only a sliver of truth has been spoken.

Never choose a dentist on their word alone. Make sure you ask for references. If no reference is made available to you, go online and search for comments and feedback from current and past patients.

This is critical to relieving worries about unnecessary treatments, inflated fees and quality of dental care.

This little bit of extra time and effort can save you from a lot of hassle and heartache.

### **MISTAKE #6: Choosing a Dental TEAM that are Not Certified, Licensed or Properly Trained**

While you can easily verify that your dentist is licensed to practice in your state as a Doctor of Dental Surgery or Dental Medicine, what do you know about the rest of the team?

Without a trained team of assistants and licensed hygienists, it's patient beware. Here are just a few common reasons why:

- Improper preparation of materials and poorly processed x-rays may impede the process and unnecessarily extend your visit and/or discomfort.
- Risk of poorly sterilized instrument and equipment can cause infection
- Neglectful or excessive billing mistakes will increase your dental costs
- Providing substandard preventative care can hurt your long term oral and overall health

Ask your Dentist about the dental team, about the training they have had and how long they have been with the dental office. Ask the staff how happy they are working for the Dentist and with the other staff members.

Your best defense is doing your homework to find a well-rounded, properly trained and licensed dental team that has your best interests in mind at all times.

## CHOOSING A DENTIST THAT IS RIGHT FOR YOU

Do your homework before you choose a Dentist:

- Does your insurance cover dental work?
- Do they perform the services you need?
- What are the fees for the services you typically use?
- Do they have payment plans in case your insurance does not cover certain services?
- Are they conveniently located?
- How long are their wait times to be seen?

To help you make this choice, we've provided a list of dental specialties and a description to help you choose which Dentist is right for you based upon your personal dental needs and requirements.

**General Dentistry:** A General Care Dentist is much like your primary care physician, a usually takes care of your overall teeth and gums.

**Pediatric Dentistry:** A Pedodontist, as it is generally called, is trained in working with children and that is usually their specialty. They have the appropriate equipment to handle children.

**Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeon:** A surgeon who specializes in dental implants, correcting cleft palates and facial repairs.

**Periodontist:** A Dentist who specializes in disease of the gums and other tissues that support your teeth.

**Endodontist:** A Dentist who typically focus on the pulp, the tissues, blood vessels and nerves inside your tooth and the tissues that surround the tooth's roots. Generally, root canals are done by endodontists.

**Orthodontist:** Someone who specializes in the bite and straightness of your teeth.

**Cosmetic / Aesthetic Dentist:** Someone who specializes in teeth whitening, tooth veneers, bridging and braces and typically focuses on the smile.

**Dental Hygienist:** Someone who assists a Dentist and generally conducts initial exams, and performs teeth cleanings. They can give you an overall plan on how to take care of your teeth on a daily basis.

By first identifying the right "specialty" of dentist you may require based upon your symptoms and your needs, you can save a great deal of time in finding and choosing the right Dentist for you.

## **BACTERIA, FUNGUS AND ALL KINDS OF SPECIES: SERIOUSLY! WHAT IS THAT IN MY MOUTH!!**

Yes, that is right. All kinds of species are living in your mouth, chomping on any particle of food or otherwise that they can find that might be in any crack or crevice of your mouth and teeth! Yes, it is like an ecosystem in your mouth and those little devils love it! It is 100% humidity in there and they are having a feast with what your mouths have to offer! There are 100's of little known species of bacteria and fungi with over 500 other living organisms yet to be identified calling your mouth home.

The worst bacteria to be aware of is the Streptococcus, which is the cavity causing bacteria. It thrives on refined sugar then converts it into acid, which in turn eats away at your teeth and causes your cavities. So...the more you can avoid the refined sugar... the better.

What is even more alarming is the fact that your mouth has more bacteria than the world's population! So what do you do about it? You need not worry; most of these bacteria are good bacteria that fend off the bad bacteria. But that doesn't mean you stop taking care of your oral hygiene, because those little buggers can turn on you in a heartbeat!

Read what is to follow and you will understand the WHY.

### **WHY YOU WANT CLEAN, HEALTHY TEETH AND MOUTH**

#### **...The Not So Obvious**

Which is more important to you: clean teeth – or good oral health? Yes, I assure you, there is a big difference.

You can have clean teeth, but that doesn't mean you have a healthy mouth and gums. You could have zero cavities, but again you could have overall poor oral health.

When it comes to your oral care it has everything to do with how well you care for your teeth, mouth and gums, how often you see your Dentist, how often you snack and your overall diet.

The U.S. Surgeon General also agrees that oral health is a strong indicator of overall health and well-being (CDC, 2006). Oral care is important for maintaining one's overall health. According to the Caucus Educational Corporation, poor oral health has been linked to heart and lung disease, diabetes, stroke, extremely high-birth weight, and premature births. Often, diseases give their first warning signs in the form of oral problems.

So, don't risk your health...make dental hygiene an important part of your health practices. The truth is that if you wait until you're experiencing pain or discomfort before you visit a dentist, you'll find yourself whipping out your wallet to spend a larger portion of your hard earned money to treat a more serious dental condition that could have been prevented.

## 7 STEPS TO OPTIMUM ORAL CARE

Now that you know having good oral health attributes to your overall health, follow these seven (7) steps to stay on top of your dental and oral care:

**STEP #1:** Make a commitment to your hygiene and brush your teeth at least twice per day. The longer food particles or bacteria stays in your teeth or mouth the greater chances of cavities, decay or diseases. If you can brush your teeth after every meal... even better!

**STEP #2:** When brushing your teeth, spend at least 2 minutes thoroughly brushing and cleaning the inside of your mouth. Brush your cheeks and tongue. This will help keep any bacteria from spreading to your fresh clean teeth. And if you really want to go all out, use a newer type of toothbrush that emits transonic waves or polishes your teeth, this strips the fimbria from microbes, which helps keep them from attaching to the enamel of the tooth. There are many good brands out there. Just make sure that it isn't just an electric toothbrush, where the head moves back and forth. A good transonic toothbrush can be up to \$100.

**STEP #3:** Use dental floss on your teeth once per day. In most cases there isn't any other way to get the food particles out from between your teeth. Flossing aids in the maintenance of your gums and can potentially prevent the need for dentures later in life.

**STEP #4:** Use a mouthwash after brushing. This helps to wash away and kill any bacteria that may still be in your mouth.

**STEP #5:** Rinse with a fluoride, as this helps to protect your tooth surface.

**STEP #6:** Limit the number of times you snack. Eat a balanced healthy diet, high in calcium and vitamin C. Avoid sugary foods.

**STEP #7:** See your Dentist at least two times per year. Regular visits can prevent emergency care such as aching teeth, gum diseases or tooth decay.

By following these seven (7) steps, you'll be on your way to a healthy smile you can be proud of and better oral hygiene.

## THANK YOU!

THANKS AGAIN...for reviewing our new CONSUMER'S AWARENESS GUIDE TO DENTAL CARE. It's our hope that you found this information helpful and useful in choosing a Dentist that you can trust. .

As we mentioned earlier, we are committed to helping our clients achieve the greatest level of oral health and educate them on the best dental and hygiene practices. We'd love for you to join the Dental Choice P.C. family for all your dental care needs.

If you have any questions or comments or if you would like to schedule an appointment – please call us at 856-983-9300.

We would be pleased to help you with your dental hygiene and overall dental health practices and we look forward to your call.

Thank you!

Sincerely,



*Dr. Melba Bonelli*

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