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DENTAL STUDIO



SPECIAL FREE CONSUMER AWARENESS GUIDE

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Special FREE Consumer Awareness Guide



British Academy of
Cosmetic Dentistry
ACCREDITED MEMBER

MAKING THE PERFECT TREATMENT CHOICE

Dear prospective guest,

Thank you for requesting my free consumer awareness guide, "Making the Perfect Treatment Choice"

I have produced this guide following feedback from many prospective patients just like you, people who have found themselves wondering if dental treatment is really needed, and if so, at what point to treat it and how.

Whether you have just received the news from your dentist that you would benefit from treatment now to avoid significant future complications, or find yourself forced to seek care due to agonising pain, a broken tooth or an abscess, I guarantee you will find this guide of great use.

Clifton Dental Studio consists of a small dedicated team committed to clinical excellence and great customer service. If you require any further information or assistance, please don't hesitate to contact us and we will do our very best to help in any way possible.

Warm regards,



Dr Neil Gerrard, BDS, RDT (GDC No: 76257)

Dentist and published author



Dr Neil Gerrard leads a small dedicated multi-award winning team committed to clinical excellence and exceptional customer service.

As an author he has published "How to choose your Perfect Dentist". A book to help anyone one find their perfect dentist for them.

Dr Neil Gerrard is the only dentist in the South West and one of only 16 dentists nationally to have achieved accreditation status with the British Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry (BACD). BACD accreditation recognises the advanced level and skill required to create the very best smiles possible. For further information visit www.bacd.com.

Dr. Neil Gerrard is a Dental Phobia Certified dentist.

Neil's area of special interest is in advanced cosmetic dentistry, smile rejuvenation and complex smile reconstruction with dental implants. He achieved a Master's degree level in Dental Implantology in 2015 (MSc Bris) after working with dental implants as a dentist and technician for over 25 years. His advanced training in Smile Design has also enabled him to become a member of many top dental institutions. To maintain his position as one of the countries leading cosmetic dentists Neil completes over one hundred hours of advanced training every year in the fields of cosmetic and implant dentistry.

In addition to his advanced training as a cosmetic dentist Neil is dual qualified as a cosmetic dental technician. These are the highly skilled individuals responsible for producing the very best custom made veneers and crowns used by cosmetic dentists to enhance their patients smiles. Possessing this extensive understanding of the complete smile enhancement process enables Neil to enhance your smile to the highest possible standards.

As an accredited member and examiner with the British Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry (BACD) Neil helps to educate dentists, dental technicians and team members in the art and science of cosmetic dentistry.

Dr. Neil Gerrard is a member of:

- The British Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry (BACD) - Accredited member
- British Society of Occlusal Studies
- Registered Dental technician (RDT)
- Association of Dental Implantology
- The British Dental Association. (BDA)

General Dental Council registration No: 76257

SPECIAL FREE CONSUMER AWARENESS GUIDE

ASSOCIATED WITH THE BOOK 'THERE IS NO PERFECT DENTIST'
AND WWW.MYPERFECTDENTIST.COM BY DR NEIL GERRARD, BDS RDT

MAKING THE PERFECT TREATMENT CHOICE

Are you confused about all your treatment choices, or concerned about making the wrong treatment decision? Is there so much information to consider you don't know where to start?

If so you are not alone many people leave the dentist feeling more confused about their choices than before they went in.

No dentist will tell you what you must do they can only advise you what you can do!

So, when your dentist says "these are your options, what would you like to do?" How do you use their advice to make the best decision for you?

Well, you can start by reading this free consumer awareness guide.

This report will help you to:

1. Priorities your number one goal – I will help you decide what is most important to you before you even visit a dentist.
2. Choose the treatment which fulfills your immediate concerns as well as your long term goals.
3. Eliminate all doubts about your treatment of choice – I will help you to stop second guessing your decision.

Prioritising your number one goal!

Before considering any treatment you must decide what your priorities are. Regardless the type of treatment you are considering you should attend your first consultation with your top priorities in mind.

As a dentist I see people from all walks of life. In general terms and for simplicity I have categorised the types of people who come to me for help into four groups, each prioritising a particular feature above all else.

Group 1 – Dental Health

The first group consists of people who place a high priority on their dental health, they are looking only to improve or maintain their long term dental health and wellbeing. They have little or no interest in improving the appearance of their smile, they just want to eat and talk in comfort while avoiding future dental problems.

These people tend to prioritise treatments which are functional and health driven before any consideration is made to the appearance of their smiles.

Group 2 – Appearance

The second group consists of people who place a high priority on the appearance of their smile and will prioritise this above any health issues. I call these people visual people, people who make the majority of their buying decisions on how something looks. These people want to look and feel confident about their appearance at all times and will often compromise long term health if necessary to feel happy about the way they look in the here and now.

Group 3 – Appearance and Dental Health

The third group consists of people who place a high priority on both their appearance and dental health. Their personal appearance is of great importance, but they are also mindful about their long term health and wellbeing. If need be, they will make some compromises regarding the appearance of their smile or treatments of choice, safe in the knowledge that their long term dental health is also being looked after.

This does not mean that they are not interested in the perfect smile, but that they also take the long term view about their dental health and so will undertake treatments that highly visual people would not be prepared to consider, for example braces.

Group 4 – No Interest

The fourth group consists of people who place little priority on either their appearance or dental health and wellbeing. Due to the type of treatments I offer I see very few people meeting this description. These people will only visit the dentist when an urgent need arises, for example tooth ache. Once this need has been met, they have no further interest in their dental health or appearance until the next time a problem arises.

What group are you?

So, what group do you feel best describes you, what concerns and long term goals are of greatest importance to you?

Are your priorities purely long term dental health and wellbeing, the appearance of your smile only, both your appearance and long term dental health, or do you value none of these, preferring to undertake treatment only when an urgent need or desperation arises?

Now, there is no right or wrong answer here, just what is right for you. As a dental professional my job is to help you make the right treatment decisions for you. A dentist's role is not just to perform a particular treatment, but to help you make an informed choice about any care you decide to undertake. There is nearly always more than one way to treat a problem, whether a dental health issue or an issue relating to the appearance of one's smile. Some treatments are ultimately better than others, but so long as you completely understand any compromises you will be asked to make, any decision you do make is ultimately the right one for you.

Balancing compromises

For the majority of people most dental care is about making or balancing compromises. Depending how you feel about your dental health or how you feel about your appearance, you will likely prioritise some aspects of your smile or dental health above that of others.

So to summarise, when considering any treatment what is your number one priority?

- Long-term dental health and wellbeing
- The appearance of your smile
- The appearance of your smile and dental health and wellbeing
- No interest

How do you choose the treatment which fulfills your immediate concerns as well as your long term goals?

What should you consider for long-term dental health and wellbeing?

I have yet to meet a patient who has asked me to make their smile look worse! So, if long term dental health and wellbeing is your only concern then you may still find that the aesthetic appearance of your smile is of some consideration to you, if only to maintain what you already have.

If long term dental health and wellbeing is your number one priority and long term goal, what treatments should you consider to prevent future problems arising while maintaining optimum dental health and fitness?

As with your general health, the key to long term dental health is prevention. Actively seeking preventive care when appropriate is the ideal treatment all dentists would recommend.

As many dental procedures are irreversible, avoiding treatment where possible is the ideal care. However, burying your head in the sand and ignoring existing disease is not going to help you in the long term, so what should you do and consider when informed of active disease?

There are a number of dental diseases which present in a number of different ways (many of which are painless and present with little or no symptoms until significantly advanced). The most common of these is tooth decay (dental decay, or dental cavities) and gum disease (gingivitis and the more advanced periodontitis). In many cases these diseases are completely avoidable or can be treated with very minimal care if dealt with early.

Preventive dentistry employs a range of different treatments to stabilise ones dental health and prevent further deterioration and disease. Treatments may include minimally invasive techniques, for example: regular dental hygiene and/or gum maintenance care to significantly slow or completely eliminate the progression of gum disease. Or, no drill fillings, where minimal tooth enamel is removed from the tooth to treat tooth decay if caught early. Preventive dentistry can also include extensive treatment, for example; crowns, veneers, root canal treatments and even dental implants. As these may be the only way to save a tooth or stabilise the health of a tooth or even the entire mouth for the long-term.

Finally, remember the number one treatment for the prevention of tooth decay and gum disease is tooth brushing with Fluoride toothpaste. The benefit of chemical agents to remove, kill or modify the disease causing bacteria which live in every-ones mouth should not be underestimated. The use of Fluoride toothpaste alone can reduce active tooth decay by 50 per-cent or more.

So, if your teeth are perfectly healthy what should you do to prevent future disease and maintain long term dental health and wellbeing? You should follow the advice of your dentist and hygienist – to brush twice daily with Fluoride tooth paste, reduce frequency of sugar consumption (it's how often you consume sugar in your diet which causes problems, not how much you consume), visit a dental hygienist as prescribed by your dentist to clean those areas you just can't reach (no matter how good or thorough you are with a tooth brush, bacteria in the form of plaque and the calcified deposits known as tarter build up around and under the gums, which can lead to irreversible permanent jaw bone damage and gum disease). Use inter-dental cleaning aids such as floss or interproximal brushes, i.e. Tee-Pee brushes, to reach through the gaps between your teeth. You miss as much as 40 per-cent of your entire mouth if you don't use these tools, or to put it another way, you are cleaning just two-thirds of your mouth if you don't floss or brush between your teeth regularly!

If you have already experienced extensive treatment in the past, due to neglect or just being unfortunate enough to have been of the generation who were victim to the school dentist and whom missed out on Fluoride, then you should look to seek the most long lasting treatments. Whether this be crowns and/or inlays/onlays instead of direct fillings to repair diseased or broken teeth, dental implants instead of dentures to replace missing teeth, or bite guards to reduce future tooth wear, jaw joint problems and broken teeth and/or fillings.

So, bear in mind, the next time you visit the dentist and they inform you of a problem you were not even aware of and what treatments you would benefit from, your dentist is looking to prevent future problems arising, rather than try to fix you when broken. Remember, once broken your only option is treatment, there is no going back!

Appearance of your smile

If the appearance of your smile is your number one priority, what treatments should you consider when undertaking treatment to enhance your smile?

If you consider yourself to fall into the second group of people I discussed earlier, a visual person, then you probably feel that you could never undertake treatment like 'Tram-Track' braces. The expression "I would rather die than wear those" has been mentioned to me on more than one occasion. If this is how you feel you would probably prefer to enhance your smile with tooth whitening and porcelain veneers rather than wait 12 months or longer to achieve the perfect smile. If so, there are a few things you should consider, not just to achieve the perfect looking smile, but to help keep your teeth for life.

Always seek a dentist with extensive experience in the treatments you are interested in and search for the most conservative treatment which meets your aesthetic requirements, for example; an experienced cosmetic dentist will be able to provide minimal or no preparation veneers (which don't look like stuck on teeth) and direct artistic or composite bonding. This will help preserve as much healthy enamel as possible, thus keeping your teeth healthier for longer with less chance of future complications. Finally, always treat the minimum number of teeth possible to achieve your goal, for example; if you are insistent on a smile makeover, consider whitening the lower teeth which are not as visible, rather than enhancing them with porcelain veneers as well.

If you will not consider braces then you may need to accept that some or all of your teeth will need irreversible removal of healthy enamel to provide your desired goal (again, an experienced cosmetic dentist will help you to keep as much healthy enamel as possible). You will also need to accept that you will be committing yourself to future treatment for life, as all cosmetic dentistry possesses a finite life expectancy it will eventually wear out and require replacement. That great smile with porcelain veneers may end up requiring replacement two or even three times over in a lifetime.

There is no right or wrong answer here, just what is right for you. Even if you are very visual person it should not mean you cannot keep your teeth for life. Just remember, you will probably feel exactly the same way about your smile in another ten or twenty years as you do today, so by-all-means, go for that smile-makeover you have dreamed about, but try not to let your heart rule your head too much just to feel great right now, as you may regret it later.

As a dentist it is my obligation to treat all my patients in a professional and ethical manner and to do no harm. Treating one as we would wish to be treated should be the cornerstone of any dentist's obligation to his or her patients. Some cosmetic dental treatments can involve severe irreversible damage to ones teeth. As a dentist I have made significant irreversible changes to some patient's perfectly healthy teeth. This is something I am not particular proud of, but am willing to consider when all other options have been rejected and the individual in question clearly understands the compromises they will be making to their long term health and well being.

The appearance of your smile and dental health and wellbeing

If you consider yourself to fit into this third group of people, a patient both passionate about their smile as well as their dental health, then you are a dream come true for a cosmetic dentist.

In an ideal world every patient seeking to improve their smile, would be motivated to achieve it in the most conservative fashion possible while optimising their long term dental health and wellbeing with as little compromise as possible regarding health.

If this is you, then you think like a dentist. This is how a dentist would seek to treat his or her own teeth and smile, and the teeth and smiles of friends and families.

The compromise here is that you will likely be asked to undertake treatments which establish a sound and healthy foundation from which to build a beautiful smile. This may mean something as minimal as optimising your gum health before undertaking the most conservative cosmetic treatments, or it may mean undertaking one to two years of orthodontic treatment (braces), to provide a foundation which will require minimal or no future treatment.

As I have stated already, this does not mean you have to compromise the appearance of your smile, you can still achieve your perfect smile, but in a fashion which will keep you smiling for life, not just the next few years.

For many cosmetic treatments this approach will often consist of pre-orthodontic alignment and positioning of teeth (braces to move the teeth to the most suitable position for either no or minimal preparation veneers and crowns). If you are of the generation who experienced large numbers of fillings as a child, then you should seek to stabilise the health of those teeth filled for the past twenty, thirty or even forty years. The most appropriate care in this scenario is likely to be the placement of crowns and partial crowns called onlays. And as a smoker, or just an unfortunate individual susceptible to irreversible gum disease, you should seek to achieve great gum health before moving on to your appearance. Remember, your gums are the foundation to all of your teeth, without which your beautiful perfect smile will not last.

No interest

If you consider yourself to fit this fourth group of people, someone who has no interest in either the appearance of their smile or dental health, then I suggest you reconsider your position, as it is very unlikely you would be reading this report.

If you still feel you fit this category after consideration I can only suggest that you re-evaluate your feelings towards both your dental and general health and well being. There is growing evidence that poor dental health can have a significant impact on your general health, from increasing your risk of fatal heart attacks, to strokes, increased risk of diabetes, to premature births and even arthritis.

The long term inflammation which will inevitably develop in a poorly maintained mouth appears to be the major risk factor. This is why preventive care is of such importance. Denial and neglect cannot only cost you your smile and ability to chew in comfort, but may cost you your life!

Stop second guessing your decision!

Imagine this scenario. Many of your back teeth have been heavily filled for many years and you are visiting the dentist for your routine dental health check. You have no history of pain or discomfort from any of your teeth, in fact, these fillings have not bothered you for more than 20 years (since they were last filled), but your dentist advises that fracture lines are now starting to appear around a filling within a tooth.

He explains all your options, which includes do nothing - leave it alone until it breaks or causes rampant tooth ache, or treat by replacing the filling with a partial or complete crown. He explains that there is no guarantee that this tooth will definitively fracture or cause tooth ache, he can't guarantee either that treatment will not cause problems, all he can say with confidence is that your tooth is at high risk of fracture and future problems? You decide to take his advice and book an appointment to have the tooth treated. But later you get home and start to reconsider, you say to yourself "the tooth doesn't hurt, it looks and feels fine, do I really need it, do I want to have treatment"?

This scenario is a common one repeated thousands of times each week throughout the country. These fracture lines are the equivalent to the Grand-Canyon to the decay causing bacteria which live in your mouth and on your teeth. These bacteria migrate through these fractures and underneath your fillings to promote tooth decay. Eventually tooth ache is likely with a subsequent need for a root filling and a crown. Not only significant treatment is now required, but significant financial costs are also incurred (the only alternative is to take out the tooth!).

When put like this it should be an easy decision to stop second guessing that you have made the correct choice. If you are happy to take significant risk with your dental health and if your long term health and well being is of little concern, then by all means, leave the tooth until it breaks or causes tooth ache, you can then decide to have it removed or undertake extensive treatment to keep it. On the other hand, if long term health and wellbeing is important to you, treat the tooth before a problem arises. No dentist can guarantee that the tooth will not cause problems even following treatment, but the likely hood is you will possess a tooth which will last for many years to come without complications.

Finally

Whenever an individual makes the decision to visit a dentist, they are often surprised when the dentist informs them of a problem that they were not even aware of. For some, they accept any recommendations for treatment made by their dentist, they have complete trust that their dentist has their best interests at heart. However, for others it can feel like they are being sold treatment they don't need just to benefit the dentist financially, they either don't believe they have a problem, or they just don't trust the dentist.

When looking from a patient's perspective it is easy to understand how this situation can arise. As a member of the public with no dental knowledge you are constantly exposed to negative experiences about dentists and dental care through the media. Every year there are a very small number of dentists who lose their licence to practice for unethical or inappropriate treatment. Unfortunately, these few bad apples tarnish the excellent care offered by the majority of hard working ethical dentists who treat millions of people each year.

With your best interests at heart, the best advice I can offer is:

Always seek very best option long-term care as a starting point regardless of the treatments involved, time scales or costs. This is not to say that you may feel a particular treatment is not right for you, that treatment time may be too long and that cost is not a consideration, but the only way to make a completely informed choice is to understand very best option care for you then work backwards.

If you decide very best care is not for you, either the treatment process is something you do not want to undertake, or find your budget does not allow it, then you will at least understand the compromises you will be asked to make and the long term implications to your dental and possibly general health that these entail.

You can find more information like this and much more in my book, There is No Perfect Dentist – available through Clifton Dental Studio and Amazon.co.uk

Yours sincerely,



Dr Neil Gerrard BDS, RDT