

One Way To Healthy Teeth...

My old football coach used to love to say, "Inch by inch, it's a cinch...yard by yard it's hard." My father-in-law puts it thusly, "You can even eat an elephant if you just take one bite at a time." In other words, just about anything can be accomplished if there is a plan and a series of achievable steps to accomplish that plan.

In many ways, both of these cliches apply to dentistry. A healthy mouth is the culmination of baby steps. For a child, healthy teeth start with regular healthy mouth check-ups and cleanings...before any problems arise. A child with a toothache is much more comfortable when s/he knows their dentist and has had regular good experiences.

The growing years are a time when small steps can be taken to promote not only healthy teeth, but also to help develop beautiful smiles, prevent airway issues, and help to position the growing jaw bones correctly. Interceptive or "phase one" facial orthopedics can reduce the length of time or even eliminate the need for orthodontics (braces). Often, when a child is done growing, braces can take longer and be more costly. Even worse, sometimes perfectly good teeth may need to be removed to make room. The only way early treatment can be accomplished is if a child's growth and development are monitored regularly.

The middle years seem to be a key time for saving teeth. Life seems to fly by for us all and routine dental care can get lost in the fray. It is much easier to fit dentistry into life and have a cavity or two filled here and a single crown placed there. A little bit at a time seems to work better than to put things off and need a bunch of work done in a hurry. Especially when there's a toothache involved.

We recently had a patient trying to schedule her dental implants in between knee replacement surgery, routine chiropractic visits, her hair, her nails, and an assortment of other doctor visits. She said all she does for retirement is go to one doctor after another. Nowadays, people are living longer than ever and keeping more teeth than ever. This naturally leads to more time spent maintaining those teeth. It sure beats the alternative.

No matter where you are in life, there's a path to healthy teeth. Whether it's a single annoying pain or a mouth of problems that kept getting put off, inch by inch, it's a cinch. The key is meeting with your dentist and coming up with a plan.

Until next week, keep smiling.

-Please send comments to Drs. Parrish through www.ParrishDental.com.