

## It's All About Options...

When it comes to teeth, no two sets are alike. Every patient who walks into a dental office walks in with a different set of pains, problems, and issues. Outside the mouth, there are other sets of circumstances that we must all acknowledge and accommodate such as insurance benefits, kids in college, time constraints, upcoming weddings or vacations, budgets, and dental phobias. The fact is that we are all very different, with different expectations and goals for our teeth and oral health. One size never fits all.

Fortunately, there are many options when it comes to taking care of teeth. The key to a good relationship between a dental team and their patients is for everyone to be on the same page in terms of oral health goals. Without going into great detail, there are several different ways to receive and manage your dental care. There's no right or wrong, just different.

Option number one...do nothing. For any number of reasons, many patients only see dentists when something hurts, an infection sets in, or a tooth breaks. The biggest drawback to this type of care is that these problems tend to occur at inopportune times. Teeth always seem to go bad on Friday nights, rather than Monday mornings.

The second mode of care is basic preventative dentistry. This often consists of routine cleanings, small fillings, and minor procedures to help prevent dental problems. With excellent home care, a healthy diet, and good genetics, some patients spend their whole lives in this stage of dentistry.

Unfortunately, some of us face more complex dental problems that require crowns, root canals, and the replacement of lost teeth. These types of treatment may be addressed one tooth at a time or by areas within the mouth, called quadrant dentistry.

In the most complex of cases (jaw joint disease, orthodontic problems, full sets of worn out teeth, cosmetic rehabilitations), treatment must be staged and planned for the entire mouth. Some problems must be treated comprehensively rather than one tooth at a time.

Most of us move through different stages of dental care at different times in our lives. It is quite common to spend years in routine maintenance and then face a mouth full of old, ailing and failing silver mercury fillings that require more complex procedures to repair. Just like our overall health, oral healthcare needs are fluid and change with time.

Until next week, keep smiling.

-Please email questions and comments to Drs. Parrish at [www.ParrishDental.com](http://www.ParrishDental.com).