

YOUR MOUTH IS A WINDOW

TO WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE REST OF YOUR BODY

BY DR. SUSAN MAPLES

In the climate of America's declining health, you'll notice your preventative dental visit is taking on new importance.

Have you noticed that when your physician looks in your mouth they look right past your lips to the back of your throat? Even if they scan your mouth, chances are they can't recognize the early signs of periodontal disease, carries disease (decay), oral cancer or occlusal disease (wear, cracks, fractures, or tooth mobility). Your dentist, on the other hand, looks in your mouth with trained eyes and sees it all.

What if we could look in your mouth with super powered eyes and immediately see an array of other signs — signs of early systemic diseases/disorders such as diabetes, sleep apnea, heart disease, acid

reflux, food sensitivities, fungal infections, drug/alcohol dependency, multiple drug interactions/side effects, vitamin deficiencies, cancer-causing viruses or depression? The good news is, we can! Oh, what the mouth can tell us about the body!

By discovering early signs of systemic conditions we can predict negative outcomes and help you preempt a major disease — at every age.

Today the new patient exam begins under one year of age, because two is too late. Eight percent of two year olds and 33 percent of three year olds already have active decay and many are on their way toward a lifetime of obstructed breathing. The infant oral exam includes a significant dialogue with your child's caregivers, helping you understand up-to-date concepts on raising healthy children.

Child exams might now include a summary of growth and behavior change: home care skills/habits, posterior airway and lip closure analysis, diet/nutrition counsel, early signs of depression, and even a letter of information and/or advocacy to your child's physician.

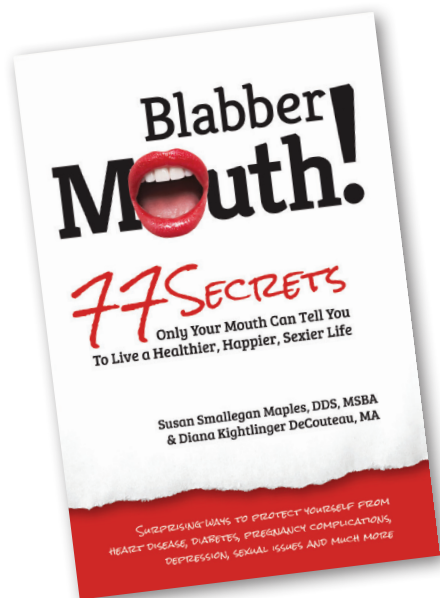
An adult, new patient visit should begin with a significant dialogue, which helps your dentist to learn your personal story of dental and medical history, current frustrations, imagined solutions and what level of systemic health/oral health/function/esthetics you are personally seeking.

When you're finally examined, ask your dentist to help you recognize all that the head/face/mouth is telling you. We now have a plethora of advanced technologies to help—for example, salivary diagnostics. From a single drop of saliva, we can detect bacteria that travel to nest in blood vessels and vital organs, genetic biomarkers of periodontal disease and cardiovascular disease, acid output of the bugs that make cavities, underlying fungal infections and HPV—the leading cause of oral cancer. We can also monitor pre-diabetes and diabetes from a single drop of blood in less than five minutes.

Make sure you don't miss a check up...your dental exam has never been more valuable.



Dr. Susan Maples is a dentist in Holt. She is also a speaker, health educator and author of BlabberMouth! 77 Secrets Only Your Mouth Can Tell You to Live a Happier, Healthier, Sexier Life. Reach her at Susan@DrSusanMaples.com



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