

Passion in Dentistry

Dr. Dana Colson

Dr. Dana Colson will present a series of articles derived from “Your Mouth: The Gateway to a Healthier You”. Teamwork involves the dental team and our patients. Education is key.

New Directions

Dentistry has undoubtedly evolved more quickly in the past two decades than ever before. While technology has given practitioners powerful new tools, science has provided a new understanding of both health and aesthetics. But there is also something larger at play: social attitudes toward dentistry are changing. It is no longer something to be afraid of—with new technology and new approaches, the opportunity to take care of our mouths is something to be embraced.

Minimally invasive dentistry is now possible due to advances in technology and materials. Dentists are looking for the simplest, least-invasive ways to correct dental problems. Whether it's fixing cavities, treating periodontal disease or creating a more beautiful smile, the philosophy is based on three ideals: identify, prevent and restore. The goal is always to perform the least amount of dentistry to restore the teeth and gums to health.

Oral health is now being regarded in the context of whole body health. Many colleges and universities across North America are already revamping their curricula to reflect this change. The dental practitioner is seen not only as someone who attends to cavities and creates beautiful smiles, but as part of a team of multidisciplinary healthcare providers unified in working toward the goal of reducing and preventing chronic disease.

Dental teams take blood pressures and health histories, and, increasingly, gather insights about risk factors impacting our oral health. They take down histories of tobacco use and soft drink consumption, record information about diet, observe neck size and note activity levels. Ultimately, they view all of this information to screen for any health alerts. Their role is primarily one of referral—helping to prevent conditions like heart disease and diabetes by referring patients for more in-depth evaluations if risk factors are evident.

Dentists are also increasingly called upon to be the gatekeepers, the first line of defense to ensure our overall health and wellness. By creating a healthier mouth, we pave the way for a healthier

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body. The goal is to encourage a stress-free mouth in order to ensure a stress-free body. The quality of daily and professional care, combined with awareness, leads to healthier teeth and gum tissue over a lifetime.

As we move forward, the role of the dental practitioner will expand and physicians, nurses, pharmacists, dentists, dental hygienists and other

healthcare practitioners will continue to work together to increase communication, demystify the mouth and how it affects the rest of the body, and empower the dental team.

Making the Connections

We have long known that there is a close connection between health in the mouth and health in the rest of the body. But over the past decades science has unraveled a number of previously unknown connections—links between our oral health and heart disease, diabetes, obesity and even pregnancy complications.

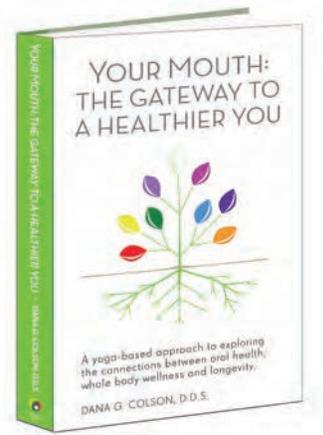
The role of the dentist has changed in some crucial ways. Increasingly, the job is not only to create but also to maintain beautiful and healthy smiles, to be the gatekeepers in identifying and hopefully minimizing other diseases. Dentists can impart to patients the power of smiling, which triggers an endorphin boost, stabilizing blood pressure, relaxing muscles, improving respiration and speeding up healing.

Author:



Dana Colson practices wellness-based dentistry in midtown Toronto. Throughout her career Dana has committed to extensive continuing education. Dana has studied Acupuncture, Nutrition, Craniosacral Therapy and Homeopathy. Dana has also taken courses in active listening and NLP. She holds accreditation in IAOMT, achieved FAGD, and is a member in several professional organizations, including the ODA/CDA, AACD and HAPA. Dr. Colson has authored the book *Your Mouth: The Gateway to a Healthier You*. Dana has lectured extensively in Canada and internationally on general, laser and cosmetic dentistry, integrating her unique wellness based approach.

The Report on Oral Health in America (2000) concluded that oral health and general health are inseparable and that oral health is integral to general health. It recognized the mouth as a portal of entry for infections that can spread to other parts of the body and acknowledged a need to change non-dental healthcare providers' perception of the importance of oral health.



Armed with shared knowledge, our patients can recognize and take responsibility for their choices and create healthy mouths and bodies to experience and enjoy life to its fullest! TW

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