



***There Are 5 Types Of  
Dental Patients:  
Which Type Are YOU?***

***by Dr. Sean Tarpenning***

# The 5 Types of Dental Patients: Which Type Are YOU?

Have you ever been to a Dentist, Doctor or Chiropractor and felt a little uneasy about the care they were recommending? Perhaps you felt like they weren't really listening or aware of your REAL concerns? Perhaps they were a bit intimidating, didn't give you the full story, or only spent about 2 minutes with you before they were off to see their next patient.

Well, it's happened to me, many times. Once, I took my oldest son to see a Neurologist (a brain surgeon), because he had a soft spot in his head that hadn't closed as quickly as it should have. The doctor checked him out and said everything looked good. Fine so far. Then as he was leaving the room he told us, and the nurse that he wanted a full head CT x-ray "just to be sure."

Mind you, this was a healthy happy young boy, with no symptoms of anything wrong. Of course the doctor failed to mention that it would cost me a little over \$3,000 out of pocket too... just to be sure? Fortunately, I have studied the human body extensively and knew that my son was fine, and I elected not to have the x-ray done.

## *It got me thinking...*

Now I was lucky, I knew enough about the human body to make an educated decision. If it would have been a "test" for my car...I would have done it. I know next to nothing about cars (aside from how to drive them!). I wondered, did some patient in my OWN office perhaps feel the same about ME the way I felt about the Doctor?

I started looking and thinking a little bit about this. As I'm driving down Golf road one day it finally hit me.

## *There are LOTS of different cars on the road!*

There are Mercedes, Honda's, Fords, Mercedes, Chevy's...trucks, cars, limo's, RV's. Why? Well, everyone has different needs, wants and desires. Some people drive big trucks because they need to haul stuff, tools and boat. Others want small fuel efficient cars so they don't spend a lot on gas, yet others love the sporty elegance of a convertible.

So what does this have to do with dental care? Well my thought was, why can't patients also choose which type of patient they want to be?



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While this may sound reasonable to you, in Dental and Medical School we are basically taught to tell you how healthy you OUGHT to be. What I've learned is that often the best care is that care that the patient feels is best for them - after being educated by the Doctor about all of the advantages, disadvantages and risks of the options of treatments available.

So, ultimately I compiled a list of what I call the "5 Types of Dental Patients." Feel free to use it to find out where you fit on the list.

## The 5 Types Of Dental Patients

☑ - **Type 1...URGENT CARE** This type of patient is in crisis or has an emergency problem such as pain, swelling, or bleeding that need our immediate help are at this level. We see urgencies immediately, whenever possible.

☑ - **Type 2...REMEDIAL CARE** This type of patient chooses treatment only when something breaks or becomes uncomfortable. Generally this type patient expects a limited type of examination, focusing on obvious problems. They usually want to correct immediate problems with as little effort and cost as possible.

☑ - **Type 3...SELF-CARE** This type of patient want a thorough examination and take an active part in the treatment and prevention of present and future disease problems. However, they usually choose repair solutions that are short range in nature.

☑ - **Type 4...COMPLETE DENTISTRY** This type of patient is similar to people described in level 3. They choose to have a thorough examination. However, they decide on a MASTER PLAN to formulate a long-term treatment plan for health and repair. These patients are very concerned about treating the causes of dental disease, not simply the effects. These patients want all dental treatment provided to be completed in the most lasting fashion possible.

☑ - **Type 5... LOOK YOUR BEST** This type of patient are like type 4 patients as far as dental health is concerned, but also want to look their best at all times. They know that their smile is the first things others notice about them and want to put their best foot forward.

Over please...



That's my list! Did you find yourself somewhere on that list?

## **So what's your point??**

I guess I just wanted to let you know that there are good dentists out there that are ready to serve you, however YOU want or need to be served right now. Without judgement, guilt trips or pressure. Oh, and by the way, it is not uncommon for people to begin at one level and progress to another over time (kinda like one day I'd like to upgrade my old Honda civic to something nice...).

To YOUR health.

*Dr. T*

Dr. Sean Tarpenning

P.S. If you are interested in becoming a patient at our office, rest assured we'd love to help you become as healthy as you choose. Call us at 715-318-8893 for a FREE comprehensive dental exam and consultation including any needed x-rays.