



Say ah to spa!

Welcome to a new column designed to share information on a growing trend — spa dentistry. What is a dental spa? How are we integrating dentistry, dental hygiene, and day spas? Is it appropriate for the profession to be doing this?

This will be an interactive column that welcomes questions and comments. I want to hear what you are doing in today's dental spas. I will answer questions and provide you with resources regarding spa dentistry and dental hygiene.

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There is much confusion among dental professionals and consumers regarding spa dentistry. Some dental offices profess to be experts. Why? Were they the first ones on the block to come up with comfort items for their patients, and then decide to call it spa dentistry?

What is a dental spa?

A dental spa is a dental office that bridges the gap between dentistry/dental hygiene and health spas. It provides therapeutic treatment that enhances the patient's visit while healing and nurturing.

Dental spas are devoted to providing the best in oral health and fitness. Spa dentistry helps alleviate the discomfort and apprehension that so often accompanies a visit to the dentist. It evolved from a group of caring dental professionals who wanted to aid the comfort and healing of their patients.

Dental offices that provide other services are not considered true dental spas, although they may call themselves anything that is allowed by their state licensing boards.

Combining dentistry with spa treatments

Are manicures and pedicures considered healing in the dental office? What about Botox injections? These are a

few of the services being provided in contemporary dental offices. Should we offer hair styling? What about tanning beds?

If we're baking cookies in the office for the aroma, are we offering these sugary items to our patients? Are we contradicting our preventive education about keeping processed sugars to a minimum? Would the dentist be liable for something like this? This is food for thought (no pun intended).

What makes any dental professional an expert in the spa arena? Share your thoughts and let's create a question-and-answer forum regarding this exciting new area of dentistry.

This would depend on what is going on in dental offices today. Giving chiropractic adjustments might be out of our league. What does it mean to use aromatherapy? Scented candles? Does massage oil and greasing up our patients make them feel better? What allergies are associated with these scents and oils? What contraindications are warranted when assessing a medical health history?

These are questions that will be discussed in this column. Your input is important. Please e-mail me at perioromatherapy@aol.com with your questions and input.

Next month, we will discuss the topic of natural healing in oral health. We will also look at the definitions of holistic, homeopathic, and alternative medicine.

Debra Grant, RDH, CA, operates her innovative company Oraspa™, Inc. ("the original dental spa"), and provides educational programs and consulting. To contact Debra, e-mail her at dwhit0921@aol.com.



