

# INTEGRATIVE DENTISTRY— A Whole-Body Approach

Judy Schaap

Staring at my computer through blurry eyes that don't like early mornings any more than the rest of me does, I was hurriedly glancing through e-newsletters, liberally punching the delete button. Dr. Mercola's newsletter caught my eye as he introduced me to a new term, "integrative dentistry." Like most of you, I am a tried-and-true appreciator of complementary medicine healing practices, but had never come across integrative, holistic, biological, health-centered, or environmental dentistry. I just had to learn more and searched for my nearest holistic dentist, which I assumed would be in Seattle or Denver.

Imagine my surprise when I found that Bozeman has not one, but two! As I looked at the areas which are served by this magazine, I found that there are a number of dentists who specialize in this important area of dentistry. You'll find sites at the end of this article which will provide ways to search for holistic dentists near you.

Dr. Todd Kinney, of the husband and wife team of Bozeman's health-centered dentists, kindly made him-

self available to answer my questions. I became excited as I came to understand that this form of dentistry complements the preventative, pro-active health choices I make for the rest of my body. Dr. Kinney not only was aware of the benefits of the healing modalities I choose to use, he was actually enthusiastic about them and congratulated my own body wisdom. Now we're talking!

"Holistic or Integrative Dentistry really means treating the whole patient rather than just the patient's mouth or teeth. Holistic dentists take an inter-disciplinary approach to healthcare. They view the patient in totality, body, mind, and spirit. Integrative dentistry is becoming more widely accepted by other health practitioners on a global level, largely based on the fact that consumers are demanding alternatives to achieve optimum wellness. The whole-body approach to dentistry should be a part of your long-term plan for the best possible quality of life." [From wholebodydentistry.com, a holistic dental clinic in Fairfield, Connecticut.]



In my initial interview with Dr. Kinney, I found that health-centered dentistry uses an integrative approach, encouraging and assisting whole self wellness and gladly working with your health care team to suggest the practices which would best assist in your needs. Imagine this... your teeth are wearing down in your mouth and you wake in the morning with a headache, sore jaw and neck. Your dentist examines your mouth and jaw and finds that your teeth do not fit together correctly as you chew and you are clenching and grinding your teeth at night. To diagnose the cause of your

## HOW TO BRUSH & FLOSS

As I was researching for the accompanying article, I realized that I had not been taught how to brush my teeth since I was a toddler. I've never been taught how to floss, etc. I brush and floss daily, but am I doing it in the most effective way? If I'm not sure, maybe you aren't either. So, I asked my local health-centered dentists.

**Q. How do I choose a toothbrush?**

A. Soft bristles on a 1 to 1 1/2" head are best.

**Q. Electric or manual toothbrush?**

A. Electric covers more area quicker, but

the best toothbrush is the one you will use regularly and effectively.

**Q. How often do I change my toothbrush?** A. Every 3-4 months. Get out a new toothbrush after being sick. Throw the germs away with the old brush.

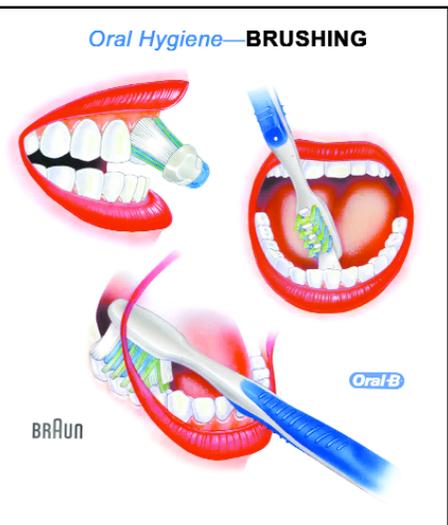
**Q. How much toothpaste should I use?**

A. The size of a pea.

**Q. What kind of toothpaste should I choose?** A. Choose a natural, flouride-free toothpaste.

**Q. What's the correct way to brush?**

A. Hold brush at a 45-degree angle, angling into the gums. Use short circular strokes which work bristles as far between teeth and below gum line as



possible. (Fig. 1, above.)

**Q. What's the correct way to floss?**

A. Wrap dental tape or floss around middle finger of each hand. Grip floss between forefingers and thumbs for control. Slip floss between teeth and wrap around each tooth by creating a C-shape around tooth. Scrub surface well below gum line. (Fig. 2, next page.)

**Q. How often should I brush?**

A. At least after morning and evening meals, preferably after all meals.

problems, a custom bite correction mouthpiece is fitted for you and your dentist discusses with you how to correct the imbalance. To aid in this treatment, your dentist refers you to a massage therapist or acupuncturist to help release the tension in the jaw muscles. With this integrative approach, an holistic understanding of the cause of the problems is unveiled and a correct diagnosis is made. This is just what happened to me. Unless you are way ahead of me, this probably does not sound like your current dentist.

IABDM (International Academy of Biological Dentistry and Medicine) states:

*Dental and oral conditions can be understood only in relation to the whole body. Just as your foot bone's connected to your ankle bone, your oral tissues are physically and energetically connected to every other part of you. Biological practitioners know that the body reflects what goes on in the mouth—and that the*

*mouth reflects what goes on in the body. Dysfunction or disturbance in one area will eventually and invariably show up as illness in related areas of the body.*

*Biological practitioners try to find the systemic causes of illness. To remove the root cause is to take a major step towards healing. As a rule, they opt for the least invasive, least traumatic and least toxic means of diagnosis and treatment. True biological care supports the body's natural abilities of self-healing and regeneration.*

*Biological practice is socially, spiritually, ecologically and environmentally aware. Its practitioners honor the right to informed consent. They know the human body is more than a collection of parts that can be mechanically worked on in isolation. Seeing us as whole, unified beings, they respect each person's individual uniqueness and dignity. They are committed to providing the patient with the knowledge, tools and power to take charge of his or her health.*

We often hear that the eyes are the window to the soul. Dr. Amy Kinney suggests that the mouth is the window to the body. Signs of systemic body illnesses often show up in the mouth, and your dentist may be the first to recognize a serious ailment. Likewise, the origins of a surprising list of body ills and complaints can be traced back to the the mouth, like gum disease, mercury fillings, and infected teeth, and can be halted at their source by an aware dentist and

informed patient working together. Dr. Kinney mentions that many of her patients report better sleep, more energy, improved memory, fewer headaches, less allergies, and improved digestion after seeing to proper mouth health.

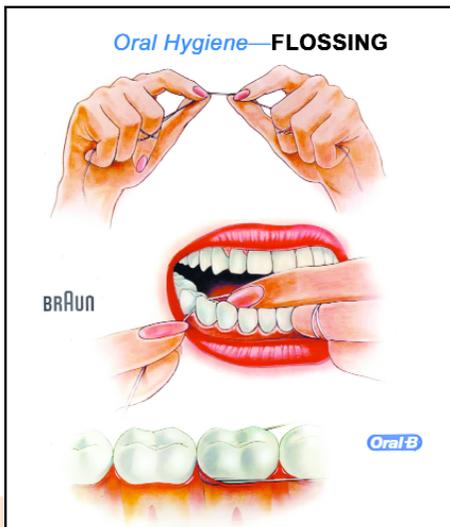
You will find that the understanding you will gain about your very own mouth, skull, teeth and spine, by asking a few questions of these well educated dentists, will excite and inspire you. You may find yourself sleeping better or going through your first year without allergies. Next time someone tells you that your sickness is all in your head... they just may be right. Find your nearest holistic dentist, open wide and take another step down your evolving path of whole-self health. ■

REFERENCES: [www.iabdm.org](http://www.iabdm.org); [www.IAOMT.org](http://www.IAOMT.org)  
[www.drskinney.com](http://www.drskinney.com); [www.mercola.com](http://www.mercola.com)  
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[www.holisticdental.org/membersearch](http://www.holisticdental.org/membersearch)

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*of Bo-Ho-Ho the Clown," and "The Forgotten Victims of Meth" in free PDF downloads at [www.NaturalLifeNews.com](http://www.NaturalLifeNews.com).*



**Q. What else can I do for a healthy mouth?** A. Brush your tongue, the roof of your mouth, insides of cheeks and even beneath your tongue, gently of course.

**Q. Why do I need to do all that?** A. You have the ability to have a healthy mouth, and therefore, a healthier body! Did you know that daily flossing can add up to 4 years to your life? Lack of flossing can even be responsible for heart disease!

**Q. What is plaque?** A. Bacteria floats freely in the mouth. In time it adheres to teeth and becomes plaque. Plaque begins to form within 3-6 hours of even professional dental cleanings. Plaque "colonizes" on your teeth. Yes, it's a living thing. Eeeewwww! It then begins to absorb the calcium that is in your saliva. When that hardens, it's tartar. Tartar is something only a dentist can remove.

**Q. How can I keep plaque from turning into tartar?** A. Simple! Brush and floss regularly. It won't have the chance to turn hard. That will save time and discomfort at the dentist and will keep your whole body healthier.

**Q. How can I have a more beautiful mouth?** A. Smile a lot, speak kind words and kiss those you love. (OK, that didn't come from the dentists, but I had to have some input, didn't I?)