



Finding Dr. Right, Part 2

I hope your New Year is starting off well. If you have resolved to find a new dentist to finish and/or catch up on needed dental work, congratulations! Part 2 of finding the right doctor should be of some help finding a starting point. As I wrote in part 1, the most important step is to have a clear idea of what you want most in a dental office or dentist.

I think the most common advice is to ask a neighbor or friend. We track how people find our office and this seems to be very low on the list. I personally think that is not a very productive starting point. When I hear the opinions of friends and neighbors it usually involves a personal view rather than an objective assessment, “He is a really nice person, but the insurance people always mess up our account.”

Many more people are referred by a co-worker. I think this is because they usually have common dental insurance and want to make sure the dentist they select works with their insurance. For some reason people seems to discuss their dentist and dentistry a lot at work.

If insurance is an important consideration (and constantly-changing PPOs complicate this issue), you could also just ask your insurance company for a list, which sometimes they will give you. PPOs and other insurance plans work at most offices, but many PPOs will steer you to an office that gives a percentage of work back to the insurance company. Insurance companies may lend a “helping hand,” but usually help themselves.

The next possible source is the telephone directory, referral services, and dental society referrals. This is the least helpful. Their referral (despite their sugar-coating) is based solely on who pays them to put their name out there. Use darts instead.

The most popular source now is the internet. Do a search for dentists in your area and review several websites. These should give you the most information. Many of these are mass-produced, so you need to look closely at the content. I’ve seen some that still have another dentist’s name buried in the text.

Once you have gathered a few names (3-4), you are ready for the next step

Dr. Haselhorst has been in practice for over 20 years in downtown Naperville, and taught for 17 years at Northwestern Dental School. He can be contacted at 420-0013, or DocJoe@NapervilleDentist.com