

## *Your Dental Health ... News and Info*

### WHAT IS THE DOCTOR LOOKING FOR? (Part 1)



*August, 2008*

*Meet Sue Drost  
Dental Hygienist*



Sue Drost plays an integral part in our hygiene department. Patients compliment her on her compassion as well as her caring manner. She truly cares about her patients and their dental health needs.

I am often asked during the course of taking a medical history “why do you want to know about that?” I thought I would take the opportunity in the August newsletter to address a couple of the most asked about questions. I would also like to preface this article by saying if you have questions always ask. Also feel free to contact us here at the Center for Premier Dentistry and we will do our best to get you a timely response.

As I am working my way through the medical history interview, the first area I always get stopped is the question of “Have you ever experienced the sensation of a burning mouth or throat?” Let me explain what we are interested in. The usual cause of this burning sensation is candidiasis (an oral yeast infection. Surprisingly they are fairly common and very easy to treat. The most typical underlying cause is usually opportunistic and can indicate that our patient may have an underlying infection or illness. The second is an adverse drug reaction or interaction. Both are concerning to us as health care providers and both are easily addressed. Always let us know if you are experiencing this sensation even if not asked.

Another common place I am stopped is when I ask the patient “Do you currently have or do you have a family history of Lupus, Rheumatoid arthritis or Diabetes?” Again here are some of our concerns. All three of these conditions can indicate or be evidence of an autoimmune response of the body. Again these conditions are common but they raise an increased awareness in oral health care providers because they can lead to various oral lesions and an increased risk of periodontal disease. A diagnosis of one of the above does not always constitute the other but it is important that we pay particular attention to our patients with these conditions. If you receive a diagnosis of one of the above from your physician it is important to let your dentist or dental hygienist know so they can add this to your dental records.

A third question asked that always either raises a question or sometimes an eyebrow is “Are you currently taken any oral contraceptives?” The importance here is a potential interaction in medications commonly prescribed in the dental office. There is a research supported hypothesis that antibiotic use decreases the efficacy of oral contraception. It is important for our patients to be aware of this interaction and to employ other modes of family planning while or when they are placed on antibiotics. If you are concerned about an interaction with medication your dentist is prescribing always feel free to ask.

The final question I will discuss in this article is “Do you have a history of any major surgeries?” Here we are mainly concerned with any coordinated treatments and any necessary pre-medication protocols we should adhere too. Many cardiac and orthopedic procedures leave stents and hardware in the body. These materials are important to the success of the surgeries and we want to properly protect them and the patients.

Undoubtedly the medical history is one of the most important parts of a patient’s dental record. Always give your health care provider as much information as possible. It is always better to have too much than not enough. If you have any questions for the doctors feel free to contact them on our contacts page. We look forward to hearing from you.