

Looking inside your mouth...

With super-powered eyes

With a national healthcare crisis looming, dentists and hygienists can help. By 2050 the U.S. CDC has projected that one in three Americans will be diabetic and a recent Harvard study projected the obesity rate will average 42 percent. Rising disease means rising disability, doctor shortages and astronomical costs. None of us are hopeful that our government can magically turn the escalating trends downward.

Calling all dental offices, the last pillars of preventive visits, to the table! As dentists and hygienists learn to examine the patient differently, they can predict negative outcomes, preempt major disease, and help facilitate health change behaviors...at every age!

Have you noticed when your physician looks in your mouth they skip past your lips to the back of your throat? Even if they scan your mouth, they don't recognize the early signs of periodontal

disease, oral cancer, or occlusal disease. We, on the other hand, look in the mouth with dental-trained eyes and see dental diseases. But, like physicians, we see only what we expect to see!

What if we could look in your mouth with super-powered eyes and see an array of other signs of early systemic diseases/disorders? The good news is, it's possible today!

Today the new patient exam begins with infancy—under one year of age—because one third of three year olds already have active decay and many are well on their way toward a lifetime of obstructed breathing. School-age child exams should now include a summary of growth and behavior change, addressing significant weight gain, diet/nutrition counsel, and even a letter of information and/or advocacy to the child's physician.

An adult new patient visit can begin with a significant dialogue, letting the patient tell their own story instead of re-

lying on a written health history. The oral exam recognizes all that the head/face/mouth is telling us, relying on plethora of advanced technologies to help—for example, salivary diagnostics. From a single drop of saliva, we can detect bacteria that travel to nest in blood vessels and vital organs, genetic biomarkers of periodontal disease and cardiovascular disease, underlying fungal infections, and HPV—the leading cause of oral cancer. We can also monitor pre-diabetes and diabetes from a single drop of blood in fewer than five minutes.

It's an exciting time for dentistry.



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Blabber Mouth!

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