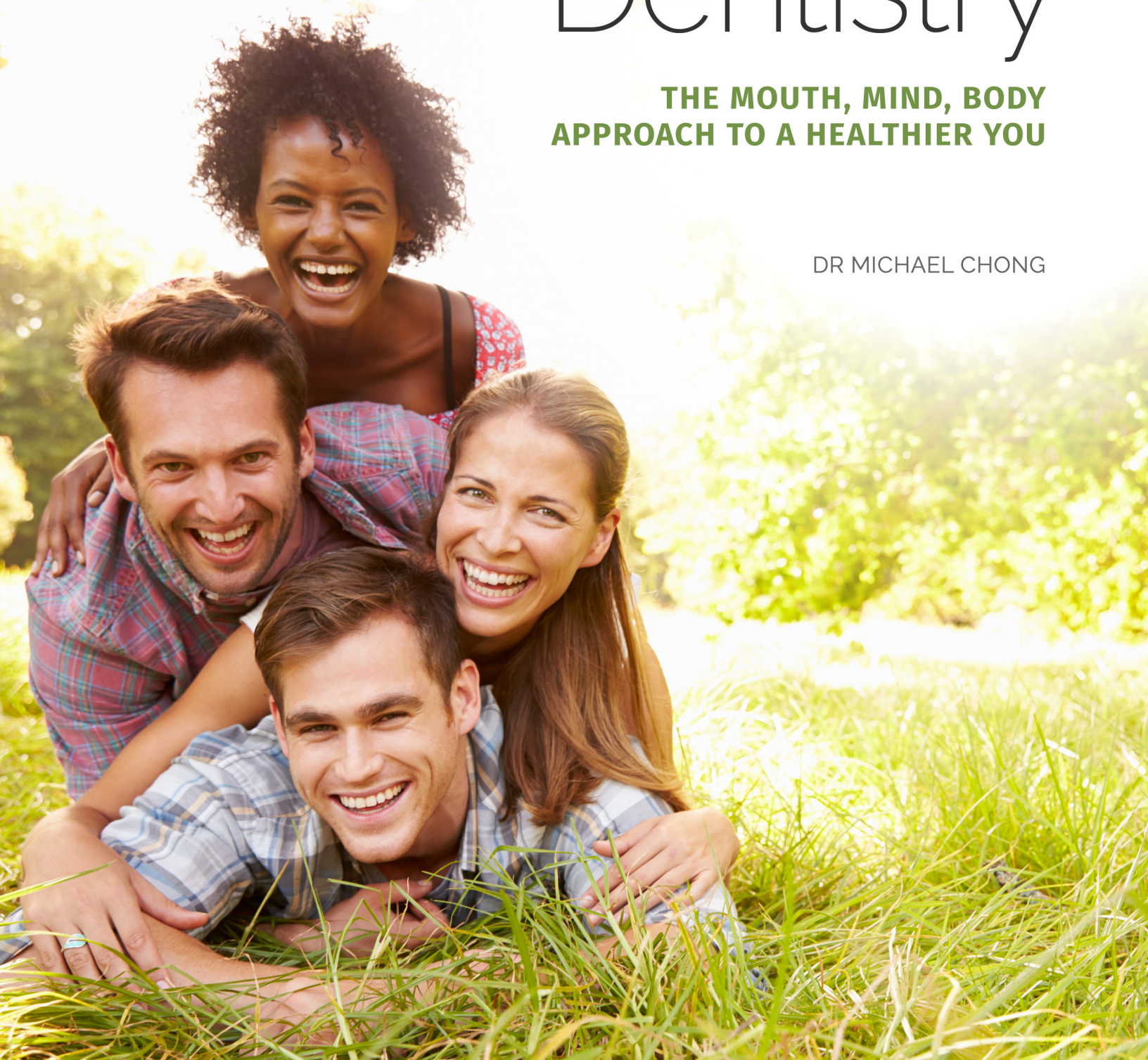


Holistic Dentistry

**THE MOUTH, MIND, BODY
APPROACH TO A HEALTHIER YOU**

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Introduction

HOLISTIC DENTISTRY FOR BETTER HEALTH



A holistic dentist does things differently than any other dentist you may have visited before. Holistic dentists address your mouth and body as a whole. How does your smile impact your jaws? Your jaws impact your muscles? Your muscles impact pain and comfort all day long? We manage them all together.

We take a patient first, health-focused approach to our treatment to ensure each patient achieves optimal dental and overall health.

The Image Dental approach to dental care encompasses the belief that there is no health without oral health.

We're proud to offer you a full range of services just as any other dentist, but with a focus on the health and wellness of your entire body. We specialise in dental services that minimise the potentially harmful side effects that have been linked to traditional dental practices including the use of mercury amalgam fillings and treatments that overly interfere with the natural functioning of the human body.

Our treatments focus on the use of biocompatible dental materials and treatments that prioritise the retention of natural teeth, as there is no effective long-term substitute for good dental health and function.

Here's what you'll want to know about what holistic dentists do and why we're different. If you still have questions after reading, contact us to schedule a consultation.



Table of Contents

TOPIC	PAGE
01. Tackling Holistic Dentistry — Where to Start.....	05
02. Metals Aren't Meant for Your Mouth.....	07
03. An Infected Tooth: to Keep or Not to Keep.....	09
04. Braces: to Take out Teeth or Not?.....	10
05. What You Need to Know about Your Jaw (TMJ).....	11
06. Where Do We Go from Here?.....	15

1. Tackling Holistic Dentistry

WHERE TO START?

What do you think about when you hear the word holistic? By itself, holistic can take the meaning of viewing a particular topic as a complete system rather than as separate parts. When extended into medicine and even dentistry, the meaning is viewed with an even murkier feel. There's good reason for this, as there is a great variation in practices and protocols in holistic dentistry.

So, what constitutes a holistic dentist?



A dentist has undergone five years of dental school followed by postgraduate courses and training. They are proficient in the basics such as cleaning, fillings and crowns. Our role remains largely in the diagnosis, prevention and treatment of diseases affecting the mouth. From there, holistic dentists take a step further.



Connecting Dentistry to the Full Body

We'll take a look at your oral health and try to connect it to all the systems of your body. We want to improve your overall health and work with other medical practitioners to make sure you receive the necessary care. Your general health is our top priority, right alongside your oral health.



Holistic dentists take a strong stance on the materials available in the treatment of the mouth in regard to potential detrimental effects on health. Major breakthroughs in the last decade have allowed silver or amalgam fillings containing mercury to be replaced by a non-toxic composite or ceramic. We now have better materials available that are more biocompatible with our physical properties that are also strong and long-lasting.

How Dentistry Relates to Your Health

The filling example above is one of the many examples of how the practise and treatment of holistic dentists differ from mainstream dentists. In the chapters that follow, the aim is to examine a few key areas with a central link to what holistic dentists do and how it links back to your general health. These topics include:

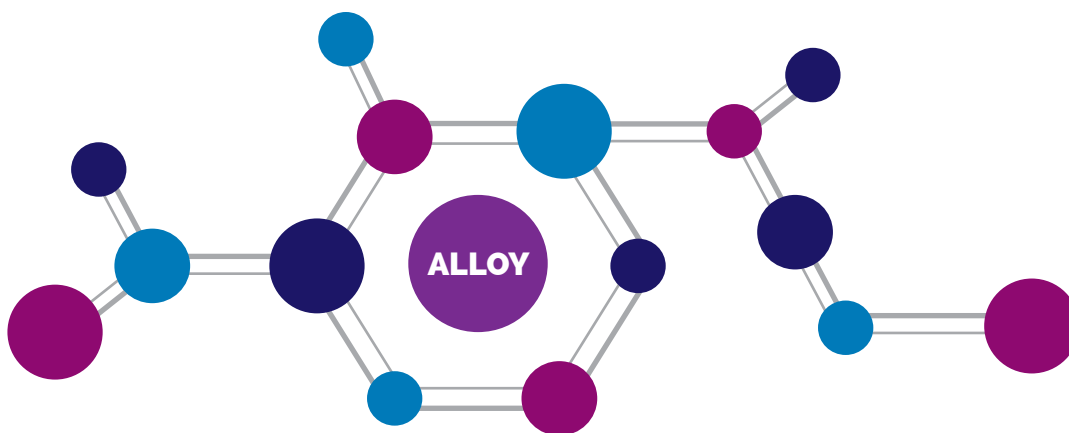
- ✓ Mercury-safe removal
- ✓ Extraction of root canal treated teeth
- ✓ Non-extraction orthodontics (where possible)
- ✓ TMJ and sleep therapy

Do you want to find out more about our holistic dentistry offerings?
Contact Image Dental or visit www.imagedental.com.au today!

2.

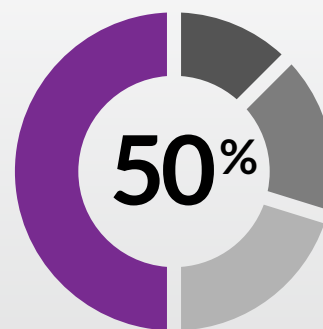
Metals Aren't Meant for Your Mouth

ALLOYS=MULTIPLE METALS COMBINED



Alloys should rank as one of mankind's greatest inventions and can be found all over: in smartphones, kitchenware, cars and the frame of airplanes. Alloys allow us to combine two or more metals (and sometimes other elements) that give us the best of their characteristics, such as strength and corrosion resistance.

The amalgam filling contains up to 50% of mercury by weight!



Many dentists know this and accept that the price to pay for filling a tooth was an amount of mercury slowly being released into the mouth.

DISCOVERING MERCURY'S DARK SIDE

The controversy over mercury fillings started in the 1940s when cases of mercury poisoning occurred due to failed fillings and fractured teeth.

So, what's the big problem with mercury? It can be summed up in one sentence:

Mercury has an affinity for fatty tissues in the body, is toxic at an atomic level and there's no known safe level of exposure to the human body.



Mercury poisoning can cause:

- ✓ Changes in vision
- ✓ Damage to the stomach and intestines
- ✓ Deafness
- ✓ Fertility problems
- ✓ Insomnia
- ✓ Irritation in the mouth and lungs
- ✓ Kidney problems
- ✓ Memory difficulties
- ✓ Muscle incoordination, tremors, loss of sensation and joint pain
- ✓ Nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea and dizziness
- ✓ Personality changes, e.g. irritability, shyness or nervousness
- ✓ Skin rashes

Mercury is released when eating and chewing as well as in response to changes in temperature and acidity in the mouth. Holistic dentists believe mercury will harm individuals as chronic exposure occurs and oral fluids cause corrosion, which degrades the restoration.

WHAT'S THE ALTERNATIVE?

The polymer-based and ceramic restorations now used allow restorations to be bonded to teeth, giving strength and longevity while being aesthetically pleasing. We now know such materials are more biocompatible with the body. These materials are more technique-sensitive, though, meaning that dentists must spend longer with their patients to prime the tooth for bonding.

Holistic dentists strive to provide patients with the time and attention needed to give them the best dental treatments.



3. An Infected Tooth:

TO KEEP OR NOT TO KEEP?

Our teeth are susceptible to infections. The sources of infection are multiple:

- Decay
- Cracks
- Leaking fillings
- Teeth grinding
- Trauma

In most cases, a dying tooth announces itself through pain (sometimes excruciating!) and discolouration of the tooth itself.

As the nerve dies, bacteria will colonise in the pulp chamber and produce toxins. These toxins will slowly accumulate within the chamber itself and at the tips of the root. The body will do its job in walling off the pus, but toxins can break down these soft tissues and will slowly expand. Patients sometimes complain of a pimple or swelling when the pus is close to the surface of the gums.

EXPLORING YOUR OPTIONS FOR TREATMENT

A root canal treatment is usually recommended to clean out the dead tissue and bacterial and seal off the chamber. A small amount of bacteria, however, will always remain. Hopefully, your immune system will fight off the remaining bacteria. Extraction is another option, which holistic dentists recommend when it's the only way to fully eliminate the bacteria.

A holistic dentist will carefully consider and plan how to fill the space of the extracted tooth. There are three main methods of replacing missing teeth:



Bridges



Dental Implants



Dentures

THE IMPORTANCE OF TOOTH REPLACEMENT

Depending on the location, replacement of the teeth plays an important function. If it's near the front, the replacement is for aesthetic purposes. If it's at the back of the mouth, replacing the missing teeth aims to prevent the loss of tooth support.

The bottom line is that the recommendation to extract infected teeth is in consideration of the patient's overall health. The duty of a holistic dentist doesn't end at taking out teeth, but also considers moving forward to plan the replacement of missing teeth.



4.

Braces: To Take out Teeth or Not?

CREATING SPACE NEEDED FOR ALIGNMENT

When considering a patient for braces, a holistic dentist uses non-extraction orthodontics whenever possible. It is our belief that most patients don't require the extraction of teeth to create the space needed for alignment. Our aim is twofold during orthodontic treatment:

- 1 *To identify the cause of the crowding, and*
- 2 *To eliminate this cause.*

Traditional orthodontists usually create space by extracting 2-4 teeth, applying brackets and wires and waiting about two years for the teeth to move into place.

*Is there a better option?
Holistic dentists offer a different solution!*

The upper and lower jaws can be slowly expanded to create the necessary space in children, teens and adults. By creating this space through the use of dental appliances, we can even prevent children from needing braces later on in life!



COMMON CAUSES OF CROWDED TEETH

What causes crowded teeth? Two common factors we often see playing a role are:

- 1 *Genetics*
- 2 *Environmental factors that cause mouth breathing*

The most central issue is the inability to breathe through the nose, causing mouth breathing when a child is growing up. Breathing from the mouth can cause the muscles around the teeth region to continuously constrict, exerting a force that pushes teeth inwards.

EXPANDING UPPER ARCH TO PROMOTE EASIER BREATHING

No one person can provide the total solution.

At Image Dental, we'll work with other health care professionals to make sure your health remains our top priority.

Holistic dentists aim to not remove any teeth and to expand the upper arch to promote easier breathing through the nose. The end result extends to integrative cooperation with other health practitioners, including nutritionists, pharmacists and naturopaths who play a vital role in assisting patients in reducing inflammation.

It can't be stressed enough how important other health care practitioners are in dealing with any sort of chronic inflammation.



5. What You Need to Know about Your Jaw



Temporomandibular Joint (TMJ) Disorders:

A fancy name for jaw joint problems and how the jaw relates to sleep problems

DO YOU HAVE A JAW PROBLEM?

The jaw contains one of the most important joints in the body as it allows for a range of movements of our mouth. Unlike other joints in the body, the jaw joint is a highly adaptable joint and it will continue to function until it starts to break down. The early stage of a jaw joint problem generally goes unnoticed but pain or soreness starts to develop, as the problem gets worse.

Many people are unaware that they have jaw joint problems. Some who do might have sought treatment that has been unsuccessful.

How long have you been living with pain around the jaw area?

SO, WHAT CAUSES THIS COMMON COMPLAINT?

Fundamentally, jaw joint problems arise because the jaw isn't sitting in a normal position to the base of the skull, leading to displacement of the joint or degeneration of the joint itself. The usual complaints include:

- ✓ Limited opening of the mouth
- ✓ Pain
- ✓ Soreness

EFFECTIVE SOLUTIONS FOR TMJ DISORDERS

Fixing TMJ disorders can be tricky. Most feel that the usual treatment isn't effective. In severe cases, some medical practitioners turn to pharmaceuticals to mask the pain.

What does a holistic dentist do that's different?



The answer lies in the type of appliance used. Holistic dentists prefer to use orthotics, or appliances that support, align or correct any deficiencies and improve the function of the jaw. Splints are used to hold or position the jaw in place, allowing healing to occur. Splints also allow the jaw joint to be comfortably supported in the correct position.



YOUR JAW JOINT MAY BE ROBBING YOU OF SLEEP

Have you ever woken up from a night's sleep not feeling refreshed? The American Academy of Sleep Medicine and the Sleep Research Society have released a joint statement saying people between ages 18 and 60 need at least seven hours per night. The quality of our sleep, however, is dependent on several factors:

- > Airways and breathing
- > Body temperature
- > Dietary stimulants
- > Pain
- > Stress

Of these factors, the jaw position is directly related to the airway and to pain. For example, a jaw that is too small will cause the tongue to fall backwards into the throat, restricting your airway opening and causing you to wake up and gasp for air. This interruption in the sleep pattern diminishes the quality of your sleep.

THE DEVASTATING EFFECTS OF CHRONIC PAIN

When the jaw is out of position for a period of years, the displacement of the joint or degeneration of the jaw bones will trigger a chronic inflammation of the surrounding areas. The jaw joint is highly adaptable, which explains why these symptoms can go unnoticed for a large part of our lives. Unfortunately, chronic pain can have devastating effects on overall health.

The brain becomes overloaded with pain signals that heighten its activity and it becomes unable to shut down.

The constant pain signal has been shown to cause rewiring of the nerve cells in the brain, as well as making changes in the activation of certain parts of the brain.

This inability to be inactive means you're not getting the restful sleep that your body and brain need.

If you experience sleep issues, get the rest your body needs with holistic dentistry.

6. Where Do We Go from Here?

USING SAFER MATERIALS FOR A HEALTHIER BODY

It's our hope that this eBook has given you insight into answering our main topic of what holistic dentistry is, and what holistic dentists do differently.

In summary, a holistic dentist differs from a regular dentist because of the belief that oral health is closely linked to general health.



At Image Dental, we pay close attention to the materials we use that affect the mouth and body. Holistic dentists question some traditional methods and take advantage of technological advancements that allow for safer materials that are more compatible with the body

Our long-term goal is to raise the bar of the standard of care for patients because we believe that this bar has been lagging behind and that a higher ceiling is achievable.

OUR FINAL THOUGHTS ABOUT ORAL HEALTH

Oral health is a complex entity in itself, even more so when it ties in with general health as a whole. Unraveling it is like untangling a ball of strings — as each individual string is slowly pulled apart, doing it too quickly can have serious consequences. Patience, for both the dentist and the patient, is paramount.

We know you may have additional questions not answered here. At Image Dental, we'll give you honest advice in a safe, comfortable environment.

Contact us today or visit www.imagedental.com.au to find out more!