

# Medically Speaking

## Educating and Answering Your Questions

Education and Communication: Keys to your dental health.

What would happen if the fire chief of a city reported that in the 23 years he had been in the position, more houses had burned down each year than the year before? I would think that city would be looking for a new fire chief. Now what if I were to tell you that every year since 1991 Americans have been diagnosed with more cavities than the year before? And to make matters worse, many of these cavities are not scheduled for timely treatment. In both cases we have a foundational issue, a lack of education.

Fire Safety Education is one of the main avenues of fire prevention for any city. When a city takes the time to educate its citizens, the risk of fire is significantly reduced. Conversely an uneducated population could potentially be at risk and their wellbeing compromised if certain basic precautions are not taken.

Now consider this scenario. A real estate agent is describing a house that you are considering for purchase. She tells you that the home is located 230 feet above sea level with a southern exposure and, in the winter, there is a north-east wind, but not to worry because the home has deep eaves and it probably won't affect the home's heating efficiency. What?! You just wanted to know how many bedrooms it had. The point being the way we communicate is just as important as the service being offered. A true professional will educate you with language you understand. You shouldn't have to try to figure out what is being said, it should be plain and simple.

We are proudly calling ourselves dentists because we got A's in science and math and successfully passed national dental boards. We are calling ourselves dentists because we deeply care about the dental health of our patients and their wellbeing. But, at the same time, we were never taught how to speak "human".



For example, say I have a patient in the chair and I am presenting a treatment after the evaluation, "You have an interproximal decay on the distal of number three. You will need an MOD porcelain onlay, but before that I will need to do an EPT." Meanwhile, you're sitting in the chair in pain trying to understand what a pregnancy test has to do with your hurting mouth.

Yes, I know I've written extensively about the benefits of technology and argued that continuing education is crucial. Technology and training are both essential from a clinical standpoint, but it's the experience we give to our patients that's most important.

Furthermore, patients should be given multiple options to consider when it comes to correcting oral problems, even cavities. I see MUCH more appreciation from patients when I talk to them about their options instead of telling them what should be done. It has been my experience that patients will more likely visit a doctor who communicates as well as educates.

Does your doctor communicate with you?

Your Neighbor and Partner in Health,

Dr. Vladimir Pastouk

Please feel free to email me at [dentalhelp@gmail.com](mailto:dentalhelp@gmail.com) any questions or concerns you might have or to let us know if you have other health topics you would like us to cover. Hope you are making the best of the beautiful winter season!



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