

suburban life

Kate
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At **Sunflower Family Dental**, patients benefit from a home-like atmosphere, state-of-the-art care, and the expertise of a skilled team led by Dr. Carol Patel.
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community banks,
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Dr. Patel with her family



A patient has plenty of company when taking a seat in a dental chair at Sunflower Family Dental in North Wales. While Carol Patel, D.M.D., works her magic, the likes of Blake Shelton, Hunter Hayes, Florida Georgia Line, and Zac Brown Band, among other country music performers, are in the room, too, playing over the sound system.

Patients enjoy the office's relaxed atmosphere, but they also appreciate the fact that Dr. Patel has every tool she needs to deliver a healthy, functional, and inviting smile. When she brought Sunflower Family Dental to life, she succeeded in creating a practice that blends state-of-the-art dental care with a dash of Southern charm. The soothing music and other home-like elements serves to comfort patients before and during treatment, even those who suffer from extreme nervousness or who have a legitimate phobia of sitting in the dentist's chair.

"To be able to give someone back the kind of healthy smile they've wanted for a long time, especially when they maybe didn't ever think it was possible, is what motivates me to come to work, day in and day out," says Dr. Patel. "When they finally have it, it's kind of like a new excitement for them. I've found that the main motivator for someone wanting a better smile is to restore their confidence. The look they give me when it happens is one of pure joy."

Dr. Patel was raised and educated in Kentucky. After receiving degrees in oral biology and chemistry from the University of Louisville, she went on to earn her doctorate in dental medicine from the University of Louisville School of Dentistry. She discovered her calling in health care while volunteering at dental clinics for the underserved. The experience showed her the immense difference a dentist can make in the lives of others.

"From the very beginning, my goal was to give a healthy and beautiful smile to every patient," she adds. "Health care is an area I've always had an interest in, and I really like working on things in a technical manner. Dentistry just marries them together—treating patients in a healthcare setting, and melding healthy mouths and healthy smiles. I have the opportunity to repair and rebuild patient's smiles, and that's very satisfying."

Suiting Every Need

Sunflower Family Dental is a full-service practice that offers general family dentistry for teeth cleaning, fluoride and sealants, oral cancer screenings, root canal procedures, and dental extractions. Dr. Patel also provides cosmetic and implant dentistry, including implants, crowns and bridges, veneers, den-

READY TO Shine

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by **PHIL GIANFICARO** | photography by **JODY ROBINSON**



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—DR. CAROL PATEL,
SUNFLOWER FAMILY DENTAL

tures, teeth whitening, and tooth-colored fillings or composite bonding.

In addition, Dr. Patel offers laser dentistry for bacterial reduction, and orthodontics for teeth straightening with clear aligner therapy. She can even help patients overcome quality-of-life issues such as temporomandibular joint disorder, also known as TMJ, and bruxism, or the grinding, gnashing, and clenching of teeth.

Have an urgent dental need in the middle of the night? The practice offers emergency services to address broken teeth or fillings, toothaches, and swelling of gums or the face. Patients are encouraged to visit the website to schedule an appointment online.

When patients arrive at Sunflower Family Dental's office, they meet a welcoming staff that has been well trained to tend to their every need. The process begins even before they step foot into the office. After making the initial appointment, patients complete an online questionnaire with personal and medical information and history. Upon arrival for an appointment, Dr. Patel will sit with a patient and

engage in a friendly discussion so she can ascertain their dental issues, concerns, and goals. The patient would then undergo a series of diagnostic evaluations, including digital X-rays and 3D photographs of the teeth and surrounding structures.

"The in-house scanner takes 3D pictures to better show the patient what's going on in their mouth," Dr. Patel says. "More times than not, those 3D images provide a better visual that may explain why sometimes they have not been able to achieve what they had hoped. With the 3D pictures, it makes it easier for me to offer an effective alternative."

Open and Honest

Dr. Patel, who is fluent in English, Spanish, Gujarati, and Hindi, feels that no one should have to forgo proper dental care. For those in need of dental care but do not have dental insurance, Sunflower Family Dental offers a savings plan created to give those patients access to a more affordable solution for quality care. The plan is designed to eliminate monthly fees, deductibles, and other barriers to treatment.

Above all else, Dr. Patel believes it's her duty to talk openly to the patient, finding out what they expect from treatment, and showing them what's possible. From there, she will craft a personalized treatment plan designed to suit their needs and meet their expectations.

"I don't like to throw the kitchen sink at them from the get-go," she says. "I've found it's beneficial to put patients on a timeline, a step-by-step process, instead of just showing them the end goal. We also try to be encouraging."

There's another element in large supply at Sunflower Family Dental: honesty.

"Lots of times patients want the result right away," she explains. "I tell them it took you a long time for you to get yourself in this situation, and it'll take time to reverse what's been going on for years. I give patients a realistic expectation; I won't sugarcoat it. But always with confidence we can achieve the end game. When I let them know what's possible, it's exactly what they want to hear."

Put another way, it's like music to their ears. ■

→ **Sunflower Family Dental**

1501 Lower State Road, Building C | North Wales, PA 19454 | (267) 477-1711 | SunflowerFamilyDental.com