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suburban life

**Dr. Peter Flaherty of
Main Line Smile rises
to the challenges of an
unprecedented time.**

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A New Day in Dentistry

Dr. Peter Flaherty of Main Line Smile rises to the challenges of an unprecedented time.

by JENNY GRAHAM

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Peter Flaherty, D.M.D., has been in practice for about 30 years. He says this year has been like no other.

“We’ve always done all we are supposed to do, in terms of cleaning and mitigating transmission of diseases, but this year has been a game-changer,” he says. “We’ve really stepped it up. Dentistry has always been safe, but it’s even safer now. It’s a new day in dentistry.”

Main Line Smile, his Devon-based dentistry practice, has adopted a number of advanced safety measures over the course of the past six to eight months: the addition of air sterilizers; employing pre-screening temperature checks; health-status questionnaires; and socially distant waiting, which

requires patients to wait in their respective vehicles until welcomed into the office. All this, Dr. Flaherty says, is to provide the safest possible environment for patients and staff.

Additionally, while teledentistry isn't an option for most care needs, digital photographs—"selfies"—are being employed to help Dr. Flaherty gauge the urgency of patients' care needs in certain situations.

"If someone has a child with a fever, or has the sniffles themselves, they can send a selfie to the office," he says. "We can give that patient a heads up about whether they should come in or if something can wait."

Dr. Flaherty, a graduate of Temple University's Kornberg School of Dentistry, has amassed an impressive résumé over the course of his career. He continues to add

months, compared with traditional treatment which can take 18 to 30 months.

Besides cosmetic improvements, maintaining one's oral health can have a positive impact on the rest of the body.

"People sometimes forget that teeth are part of the body," Dr. Flaherty says. "Oral health is tied to good health overall. There is definitely a connection between oral and systemic health—particularly gum disease and cardiac health. Bacteria from the mouth can cause inflammation, which can cause high blood pressure and hardening of the arteries. These are not separate entities."

Another bridge connects diabetes to a heightened risk of gum disease. When immune responses are compromised, Dr. Flaherty says the susceptibility to periodontal disease increases.

tenths of a millimeter matter. It makes for better dentistry."

Time for a Makeover

Smile makeovers have seen a rise in popularity this year, according to Dr. Flaherty. After a two-month closure period at the start of the year, demand for top-shelf dental care has been high.

"It's a fantastic time to do a smile makeover," he says. "With people not vacationing, not traveling, not going to restaurants or dinners, they have a little extra cash to spend on themselves—home improvements, including offices and gyms, and smiles."

Dr. Flaherty suggests that more than 1,000 appointments had to be cancelled, but "fortunately, our patients are terrific, and understanding," he praises. He credits his

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to his credentials and expand his knowledge base through membership in professional organizations such as the Academy of General Dentistry.

From primary care to advanced and state-of-the-art services, Dr. Flaherty and the Main Line Smile staff can address myriad oral health issues. Patients come into the office for everything from whitening and deep bleaching (such as Opalescence Boost in-office whitening, which can help patients achieve teeth up to 15 shades lighter in appearance than other options), to cleanings and fillings, to implants and veneers, to endodontics and whole-mouth reconstruction.

Invisalign and other clear aligner therapies, courses of treatment that feature orthodontic correction via invisible trays worn over the teeth, are popular options as well. This brace-free alignment technology averages a total treatment time of nine to 15

The oral-systemic connection is just one reason Dr. Flaherty has invested substantially in the latest technology for imaging and care. Employing micro-cameras, digital imaging, and 3D scanning tools help Dr. Flaherty to stay at the top of his game. Also, gone are the days of impressions made by way of viscous goo; digital impressions provide better and more accurate care. Likewise, a 3D CBCT (cone beam computed tomography) scan provides a detailed roadmap of the patient's facial structures to assist in treatment planning.

"With this technology, we have far better diagnostic capabilities," he says. "We can find cracks and sources of infection. We can make surgical guides that can precisely place an implant so we know exactly where it is going in a setting where

staff for maintaining and nurturing all these wonderful relationships.

"I'm blessed to have a really, really great staff," he says. "I couldn't ask for a better group to be with."

With such long-tenured employees, and 30 years of experience behind him, some might think Dr. Flaherty would rest on his laurels—but nothing could be further from the truth.

"Sometimes, you might get tempted to coast—and I guess there's a time and place for that—but I like to keep myself challenged," he says. "I'm a lifelong learner and a believer in continuing education. Plus, I find it really enjoyable."

"I'm lucky," he continues. "I picked the best profession for me. I love it, and I'd never want to do anything else." ■



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