



FEAR MAKES A FRIEND OF THE DENTIST

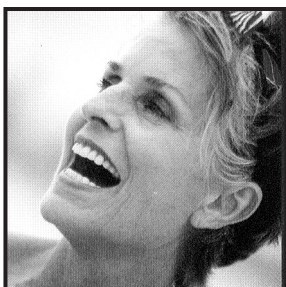


**By: Steven D. Spitz, DMD
Prosthodontist/Dental
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The fear of going to the dentist is not unusual. Fear may come from the memory of a childhood incident, a dental emergency, a past dentist without such a great chairside manner, or memory of a painful procedure. The smell of the dental office, the sound of the drill, the thought of an injection, can cause a cold sweat. For many, there is such an intense fear, that even with severe pain, many find it is easier to neglect it than to treat it.

Technology today offers many opportunities to **replace the feeling of fear with that of comfort, especially through the use of the dental laser and conscious sedation.**

When having treatment completed with the *dental laser*, there is **no drilling, no bleeding** and, in most cases, **no pain or anesthetic** involved. Though the laser has been used for years and is proven effective in treating many dental issues, it has been relatively unknown as a treatment by dental patients. However, recently **dental laser treatment is being recognized as a first-rate solution** to quell many dental fears and concerns.



In the case of the Waterlase laser, laser energy 'excites' water molecules,

in such a way that it **actually numbs the treated area creating its own anesthetic.** With this in mind, discomfort and inflammation are at a minimum and, in most cases, **anesthetic is not necessary.** No shots and no numbing effect as it wears off naturally within minutes of completing the procedure. There are also fewer traumas to the treated area than with a drill, minimizing any pain. Since the laser does not have direct contact with the tooth, as does a drill, the vibration that would cause irritation is actually negated. Using the wavelength of the energy to seal the tissue, the treated area **actually begins healing itself immediately** following the procedure.

Conscious sedation also referred to as oral sedation or 'sleep dentistry' is a great option for many individuals for most procedures, including the laser. Conscious sedation is administered through a small oral pill that causes the feeling of relaxation from anxiety. Some individuals may not remember their appointment and surely will not remember any discomfort or fear. The medication is administered an hour prior to the appointment and in some cases, again immediately proceeding the procedure. The patient can answer questions and follow direction from the dentist and is 'awakened' from the 'sleep' by juice or sugary food. A good night sleep should follow, with a feeling of rest and relaxation the next morning. Individuals with a history of medication or alcohol concerns should consult their physician prior to their treatment using conscious sedation.

What to know: Lasers
What type of laser is being used and what procedures their specific laser is FDA approved for? Not all lasers are approved for all treatments. Some are approved for gum tissue, some for tooth structure and bone, and one, the Waterlase laser, is approved for all.

Is anesthetic or a drill a necessary component? It is important to note that in some cases either one may be necessary in conjunction with the laser.



What type of training do they have with the laser? As dental lasers go, there are many types and brands that are used in dentistry today **applicable for everyday dental procedures**, such as fixing small cracks, filling cavities, and preparing crowns, **as well as more complex surgical treatment** such as placing dental implants.

It is important to talk to your dentist as well as researching your options. Obtaining information either by phone calls to dental offices or on dental websites gives you the ability to receive clear and concise information as well as options for all types of treatments.

What to know: Sedation
What type of training or licensure does the den-

tist have? Do they have a certificate or license?

How many patients have used sedation in their office? Is it a procedure done often or on certain occasions?

Does the office have standardized procedures for the patient and the office? What to do prior to appointments, what to expect during and after your appointment, and what others caring for you should know.

For more information or to schedule a consultation, please contact Dr. Spitz at 617-437-1060.

Publisher's Note
I recently had some work done on my teeth by Dr. Spitz, and nobody has ever gone to such efforts to make me feel as comfortable and relaxed. He genuinely cared about my entire well-being rather than simply going through the motions to get me out of the chair as quickly as possible. If you are as nervous as I am about seeing the dentist, I highly recommend seeing Dr. Spitz for your next appointment.

ADVANTAGES OF LASER DENTISTRY

- More precise treatment allows for less tooth structure to be compromised.
- Healing begins immediately and recovery time is greatly reduced.
- More sterilized environment, and reduced risk of infection as the laser kills bacteria on contact.
- Minimal discomfort compared to the use of dental drills.
- No need for anesthetic or needles in most cases.
- No drilling noise or smell.
- Treatment lasts longer.

WHAT CAN THE LASER DO?

- Treatment of canker and other mouth sores
- Placing dental implants without drills
- Periodontal (gum) surgery
- Root Canal Treatment
- Treatment of children
- Composite fillings
- Tooth whitening
- Cleaning teeth
- And more,
- ASK.

Steven D. Spitz, DMD is the proprietor of Smileboston Cosmetic and Implant Dentistry in Boston, a Prosthodontist and a dental implant specialist. Dr. Spitz, co-founded the Institute of Advanced Laser Dentistry and co-invented the Perfect-Fit™ Laser Implant Surgical Guide (patent pending). He has lectured nationally and internationally on the advanced applications of lasers and implant dentistry. At the 2004 World Clinical Laser Institute symposium, Dr. Spitz received the "Award for Leadership and Outstanding Contributions in Advancing Dentistry Through Laser Technology."

Dr. Spitz has the ability, education, and training to complete the surgical and aesthetic phases of dental implant treatment. Having been trained surgically in the placement of various types of dental implants and as a Prosthodontist has allowed Dr. Spitz to treat individuals that have been told dental implants will not work for them.

Dr. Spitz, who treats all facets of dentistry, welcomes your questions.

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