

## **“Root Canal Averted!”**

**By: Dr. Dimitri Perdikis**

When I tell you that being treated by dr. Perdikis was a turning point in my life, I mean it. So much has happened since I wrote my first article about my experience with dentists. Then, my frustrations were in finding a compassionate dentist that would listen to me and involve me in my treatment program. I wanted an office with a friendly staff that works with my schedule. I found all that... and more.

After my first visit, Dr. Perdikis' comprehensive exam revealed that I had high blood pressure and periodontal disease. At his urging, I made an appointment with my general physician and addressed my high blood pressure.

My next step was to address some broken, decayed and missing teeth. I had been avoiding this for a long time. I admit I'm guilty of putting everyone else first. However, with Dr. Perdikis I'm learning that my oral health has a much greater impact on my overall health than I ever imagined. Before we could start treating my periodontal disease, we needed to address some broken teeth and a wisdom tooth that had not fully grown - all contributors to the harmful bacteria in my mouth. That wisdom tooth often hurts. My previous dentist would write me a prescription for an antibiotic and I would feel better. This went on for years. What I didn't know, I had an abscessed tooth and it was infected... always!!

My tooth abscess was a collection of pus caused by a bacterial infection around the root of my tooth. Sometimes I had symptoms of a severe throbbing toothache and other times a swelling in my cheek would appear. When the abscess would drain there was a sudden foul-smelling and foul-tasting fluid in my mouth. I would treat

this with mouthwash! My abscessed tooth wasn't going away without real treatment. After it would drain, the pain would go away, but the infection persisted. I was risking a potentially more severe infection and I didn't even know it.

Dr. Perdikis drained my abscess and prescribed antibiotics to eliminate the infections. While the area is healing, he recommended rinsing with warm salt water and taking over-the-counter pain relievers as needed. Dr. Perdikis told me some cases require a root canal, but in severe cases the tooth needs to be extracted. In my case, he recommended the removal of my tooth.

Unfortunately, that wasn't the end. I had other teeth with decay - cavities. My symptoms varied depending on the size and location of the cavity. For many of them I had no symptoms at all. As the decay grew area's of my tooth would become soft and eventually holes would break open. Finally, only after the pain started would I go see my previous dentist. Usually he would say I need a root canal.

Dr. Perdikis said our first step was to stop the decay. Some of my teeth have large areas of decay. He used a filling for immediate treatment. It was a conservative approach with a material called glass ionomers. The final treatment would be determined later. Rather than deciding tooth by tooth what treatment I needed he said we would make all decisions based on my comprehensive treatment goals. For now the root canal is averted!!

This is a whole new level of dental care for me. I've never felt so secure and confident with my level of care. Stay tuned for the next article when we'll address periodontal disease treatment.