San Francisco practice makes house calls

In a society where expert medical care seems ever more elusive and impersonal, the last thing you might expect is a dental practice that makes house calls. However, Bay Area House Call Dentists (BAHCD), based in San Francisco, has built a thriving practice around visiting their patients where they live.

Rather than serve the well-to-do, BAHCD specializes in helping some of the Bay Area’s least-served populations: the elderly, the housebound and the infirm. BAHCD is a service of the Blende Dental Group, headed by Dr. David Blende, a practitioner with more than 20 years of experience providing comprehensive dental care and a leader in the field of dental surgery.

“We serve not only people with disabilities, which is what people think of when they think of special needs, but also people with severe phobias and complex medical conditions,” explained Dr. Cheryl Elacio, director of house call services and geriatric services for BAHCD. “Basically anyone who is not a good candidate for a traditional dental office for either physical, emotional or cognitive reasons.”

BAHCD patients may include a child with autism, a senior with Alzheimer’s disease, an obese or otherwise immobile individual or someone who’s simply too scared to set foot in a dentist’s office. These are people who regularly go without dental care because their caretakers are unable to get them to a dentist, and because dental problems, unless accompanied by acute pain, often go diagnosed.

During their house calls, BAHCD practitioners take X-rays, perform cleanings, identify gum disease, prescribe medicines, remove infected teeth, identify and sometimes fix poorly fitting dentures and determine effective courses for longer term comprehensive treatment where needed.

Because of the flexible design of the BAHCD practice, Dr. Elacio said, “there is no reason a house call can’t be a thing of the past.”

Let’s hear it for hygienists!

Crest Oral-B will recognize five deserving dental hygienists who go above and beyond the call of duty on a daily basis. Nominated by their peers, these professionals truly make an impact on patients and the oral health cause.

Another reason to stay in shape

The health complications of being overweight, such as increased risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes and certain cancers, have long been reported. Health care professionals often urge patients to manage their weight and strive to get physical exercise each day to achieve and maintain overall health.

And now, researchers have uncovered another benefit of maintaining a fit lifestyle: healthy teeth and gums.

In a study published in the August...
of experienced and compassionate care, the BAHCD team, including a staff of dental professionals, can help whether one is leaving home for a brief trip or staying home to accommodate an elderly relative. "If a patient needs to go to the dentist, but cannot be done in the home, the BAHCD team handles the arrangements for the follow-up visit at the BAHCD office or in a local dental office," says Dr. Blende. "We can help get the patient to and from treatment, completing the work itself and having a specialist on hand to keep the patient calm, comfortable and safe.

Elacio and her BAHCD colleague, Dr. Samer Itani, perform many of the treatments done in the home. So a patient might need multiple cleanings, they're all done in the home. A confused or frightened patient to sleep through the procedure. Allowing a confused or frightened patient to sleep through the procedure is especially important for children and Alzheimer’s patients. Allowing a confused or frightened patient to sleep through the procedure is especially important for children and elderly patients, as well as those with dementia.

In fact, Bay Area House Call Dentist team frequently receive referrals from other dentists who are in despair over getting their elderly or infirm patients in for office visits, who turn to the BAHCD's in-house treatment capabilities as the best answer. "House calls are not easy, but we firmly believe that helping everybody can have, and everybody deserves, the best possible care," Blende says.

A success story

Minerva Dutra of Petaluma, Calif., is more than convinced of the value of in-home dental care. Dutra's 76-year-old mother, Delores Dawson, has Alzheimer's disease, uses a wheelchair and lives in a residential care home. Dawson recently received at-home care from BAHCD followed by surgery performed by Blende. "My mother has specific needs, and other dentists weren't able to accommodate her," Dutra says. "I was very happy to have a dentist come to us instead of my having to drive my mom all around. The doctor who came to our home, Elacio, and her assistant were sweet, caring and extremely skillful. When it was time for the surgery, Blende was fantastic, always letting me know what was going on and taking extra steps to be sure my mom was comfortable. I had all the confidence in the world in him. Now my mom feels much better. It's a great relief."

(Source: PRWEB)

A study indicates that control and physical fitness may help reduce the risk of severe gum disease. (Photo/Paul Moore, Dreamstime.com)

issue of the Journal of Periodontology, researchers found that women who maintained a healthy weight and had high levels of physical fitness had a lower incidence of severe periodontitis. "Using body mass index (BMI) and percent body fat as a measure of weight control, and maximal oxygen consumption (VO2 max) as a measure of physical fitness, researchers compared subjects' weight and fitness variables with the results of a periodontal examination. That included helping everybody can have, and everybody deserves, the best possible care," Itani says.

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