

Health & Medicine

Proceed with Caution: Dental Procedures after Joint Replacement



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News broadcasts and the popular press have recently carried numerous stories about the aging of the American population – especially the Baby Boomers, who begin turning 60 this year. Much of the coverage has focused on the financial impact of this trend – especially on the Social Security and healthcare systems. Other stories have dealt with the rising incidence of health problems like osteoporosis, Alzheimer's disease, diabetes, hypertension, and others.

There is one important age-linked health condition that has not received much attention, however. As the population

ages, more and more joint-replacement surgeries are performed every year – especially hips and knees – and there is an increased risk of infection created when certain types of dental treatment are performed on patients who have recently undergone surgery for joint replacement.

This increased risk occurs because the dental treatments unavoidably introduce higher levels of common oral bacteria into the bloodstream. These bacteria can then travel through the circulatory system and settle in the artificial joint, increasing the risk of infection.

Whenever possible, the American Dental Association and the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons jointly

recommend that high-risk dental treatments should be completed before any joint-replacement surgery. When that is not possible, the risk of infection can generally be well controlled by preventive oral antibiotics given before the dental procedure is undertaken.

According to an article published in the Journal of the American Dental Association (July 2003), dental treatments that involve a high risk of producing high levels of blood-borne bacteria include all extractions and periodontal procedures; implant placement and replantation of teeth that were knocked out; some root canal work; initial placement of orthodontic bands (but not brackets); certain specialized

local anesthetic injections; and regular dental cleanings, if bleeding is anticipated.

Guidelines in the same article suggest that the use of preventive antibiotics is usually indicated for at least two years following joint-replacement surgery. Additional indications include any history of infections in your artificial joint; the presence of inflammatory arthritis, type 1 diabetes or hemophilia; malnourishment or autoimmune suppression; or a history of prior or present malignancy.

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Respect In Parenting

Judy was shopping in a grocery store with a friend. The friend picked up an orange from a display. A number of oranges

rolled on to the floor. Judy bent down to help her friend gather up the oranges. Another woman was shopping with her

daughter. Her daughter picked up an orange from a display. A number of oranges rolled on the floor. The woman yelled at her daughter, yanked on her arm and threatened to punish her.

Was the young daughter's behavior any more of a problem than the adult friend? How do we show our children respect yet correct behavioral problems? How we treat our children and behavior around them greatly affects how they behave and treat us as parents and others. The young daughter learned to be embarrassed by her and her mother's behavior. She learned that she was an embarrassment to her mother. With respect, her mother could have taught her how to pick up an orange carefully or how to see if the orange was safe to pick up from the pile. The mother could have helped her daughter pick up the fruit and showed her what kindness meant.

Respect, as well as disrespect, are taught in subtle ways to our children. Respect is taught in the ways we answer our children's questions, when we stop to fully listen, and take the time to teach them manners and courteousness. When we avoid and ignore the questions of our children, we teach them to ignore

our questions and not to give us information. When we do not listen to what our children want to share with us, we teach them to not listen to us. When we say "stop that" and do not teach the proper behavior to replace the problematic behavior, we have disrespected our children.


Parenting is the most important job we will ever have. The more time and attention we put into our children when they are young, the less difficulties we will have with them as they get older. It is respectful to our children to discipline them carefully, so they can learn self-discipline. Another example: Sarah's mother does not want to discipline her daughter, because her father does not live with them, she does not want to hurt her daughter's feelings, and her daughter makes a scene. Sarah's behavior is out of control at home. She yells and curses at her mother. She has even punched her mother in the arm. Sarah's mother has disrespected her daughter by not having the courage to carefully discipline her. Instead she gets frustrated with Sarah then yells, cries, and begs her to behave. Yelling is not discipline. Discipline is giving a consequence that fits the problematic behavior, teaching better behavior, and helping a child to understand.

Yelling teaches Sarah to yell back. Losing control of our feelings and behavior teaches our children to lose control of their behavior and feelings. Disciplining Sarah from when she was young would have taught Sarah not only good behavior, but also self-discipline and self-respect.

Respect in parenting means that we help children learn how to make friends. We teach them manners in a variety of situations, such as writing thank you notes. The importance of education and learning throughout their life time is taught by respecting our educational system and continuing to educate ourselves when someone is treating us poorly, even if it is an authority figure, such as a teacher. We teach them to take care of their bodies and health. Children need to know how to handle money and to save for the future.

A positive attitude, teaching problem solving, and self-discipline are gifts we can give our children. The opportunities are there many, many times everyday. Respect also teaches kindness, love, positive self-esteem, and many other good traits.

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