



Dr. Willock has an impressive display of diplomas, certifications and awards reflecting his years of study to gain dental knowledge and skills.

The Relentless Pursuit of Healing Knowledge

Indefatigable is a word that is a good fit to describe Dr. C. Michael Willock's relentless pursuit of knowledge and skills on behalf of his patients. He is a holistic dentist based in Chapel Hill, who often sees patients who travel from some distance to benefit from his years of practical experience and formal training.

This spring, Dr. Willock completed his 29th year as a practicing dentist, receiving his DDS from UNC Chapel Hill. And he continues as a passionate student of best—and most often holistic—dental practices.

“Simply put,” he says, “I have an internal driver to learn more, on behalf of all of my patients. You might call me a dental geek—I get great pleasure in learning about the latest advances and accomplishments in dental science. I have a simple mantra: when there is a need for a patient to have a certain procedure, I will perform it only if I know for certain that I can do the task as well as a specialist. That’s a driver that keeps me intensely involved with many different

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venues, pretty much throughout the country and sometimes beyond.

“For example, I completed the Master Class with Jerry Tennant, MD, at the Tennant Institute for Integrative Medicine in Texas. Notably, he pointed out that, on average, we lose 10 percent of our ability to make nitric oxide for every decade of life—a fact that plays a significant role in the development of a host of silent diseases, including diabetes, heart disease, kidney disease, strokes, and stress. So, I often encourage my patients to consider adding nitric oxide to their daily intake of vitamins and supplements. I’m pleased to share sound nutritional information with my patients and encourage them to care a great deal about the quality of food they take in each day, just as I do.”

LINKING ORAL AND GENERAL HEALTH

Without good oral health, Dr. Willock explains, “attaining optimal general health is difficult if not impossible. The American

Academy of Periodontology (AAP) continues to make the case: infections in the mouth can cause major health problems in other organ systems in the body.”

AAP studies, he notes, make clear that periodontal bacteria can enter the blood stream and travel to major organs and begin new infections. The consequences, he says, may include the development of heart disease, the country’s number one cause of death; an increased risk of stroke, and a serious threat to people whose health is compromised by diabetes, respiratory diseases, or osteoporosis.

“It may seem unlikely and even a bit far-fetched that a little bleeding of the gums may signal the onset or possibility of a major health problem, but it is nonetheless true,” the doctor says. And the problem is pervasive: Estimates are that about 85 percent of American adults have some form of gum disease, and 50 percent have moderate to severe periodontitis. The incidence increases significantly among pregnant women.

“Periodontal disease is linked to coronary heart disease, stroke, diabetes, pancreatic cancer in men, worsening lung disease and, in pregnant women, low birth weight and premature births,” notes Dr. Willock.

“Bacteria enter the blood stream from the mouth via the circulatory system, thus affecting everything from other organs to, in the case of pregnant women, the fetus.”

TREATING THE PROBLEM

The most effective way to combat periodontal disease is with scaling and root planing, says Dr. Willock. “This is a common periodontal procedure to clean tooth-root surfaces to remove plaque, tartar, and calculus from deep periodontal pockets, and to smooth the root to remove bacterial toxins.”

The importance of scaling and root planing are especially important for women who are pregnant or want to become pregnant. “A report in the *Journal of Periodontology* was based on a study of 366 pregnant women who had periodontitis—which is periodontal disease at a serious level, with destruction of attachment fibers and supporting bone that hold teeth in the mouth. The study found an 84 percent reduction of premature births in women who were less than 35 weeks pregnant, who received scaling and root planing.

“In this practice,” says Dr. Willock, “we routinely counsel women who are pregnant or thinking of becoming pregnant to receive a full periodontal exam and diagnosis.”

The link between periodontal disease and diabetes is also well-established, Dr. Willock notes. “Studies show that people with diabetes are more likely to have periodontal disease than people who don’t—probably because diabetics are more susceptible to contracting infections. It’s increasingly clear that patients with poorly

controlled type 2 diabetes are more likely to develop periodontal disease than are well-controlled diabetics.

“And the problems flow both ways. People with periodontal disease who have diabetes find it more difficult to control their blood sugar. It’s really important that diabetics who have periodontal disease be treated to eliminate the periodontal infection.”

ON THE ROAD AGAIN

Dr. Willock continues to learn about connections between oral health and organ systems throughout the body. He continues extensive travels and studies as he broadens his general practice to include many aspects of holistic dentistry, simply, he says, “to better understand and address the overall health concerns of all of my patients. Dental health and physical and emotional health are inextricably linked. My goal is simply to better understand those connections when it is helpful to my patients to do so.”

His recent studies, in locations throughout the country, have included gaining expertise in biological dentistry, links between acupuncture meridians and oral health, homeopathic remedies with dental applications, blood chemistry, nutrition and supplementation, environmental and detoxification issues, and critical relationships between oral health and general physical health.

An accredited member of the International Academy of Oral Medicine and Toxicology (IAOMT), Dr. Willock is one of the few dentists in the area who has had extensive training in the safe removal of amalgam fillings.

In addition to the IAOMT, Dr. Willock is board-certified by the International Academy of Biological Dentistry and Medicine. He completed an 83-hour post-graduate course in environmental medicine for health care professionals at the Southwest College of Naturopathic Medicine, in Scottsdale, Arizona. **hkh**

EXPLORING DENTAL IDEAS

Dr. Willock regularly invites his patients who are so inclined to join him in the pursuit of holistic dental information and techniques. His current recommendations:

- **Dr. Garry Gordon, MD, DO, MD(H):** often called “the father of oral chelation.” Enjoys an international reputation. www.gordonresearch.com
- **Dr. Jerry Tennant, MD, MD(S):** holistic physician, Texas. Excellent book on healing from Amazon. Healed himself from encephalitis. www.tennantinstitute.com.