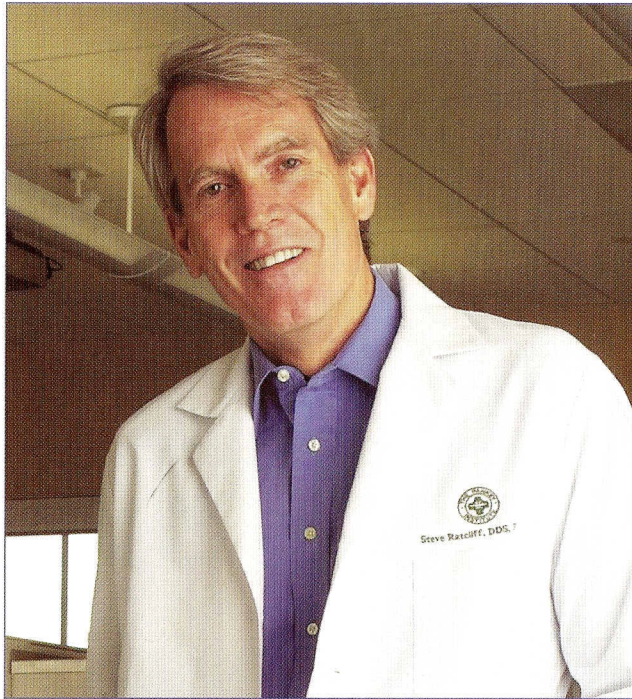


# The Comprehensive Exam

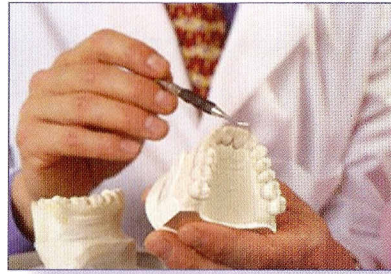
by Steve Ratcliff, D.D.S.

Chairman of the Department of Education

The Pankey Institute



*Tour your mouth with your dentist and discover the possibilities for your improved health, function and smile.*



*A comprehensive evaluation is important for every new patient and those experiencing changes in their oral health.*

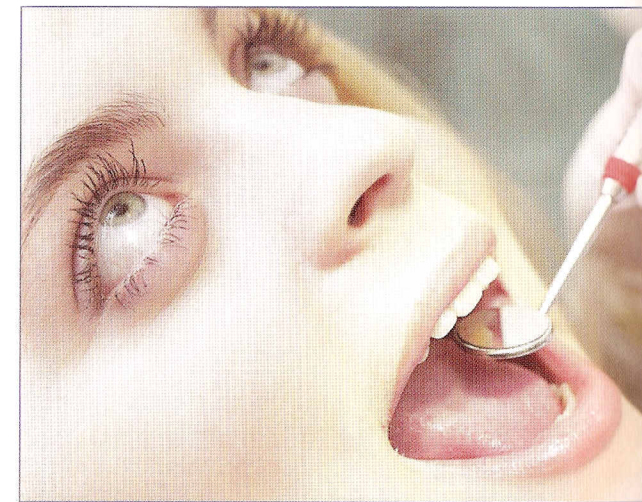
Your dentist is one of a small percentage of dentists who have invested in post-graduate training at one of the world's premiere continuing dental education institutes, The Pankey Institute for Advanced Dental Education. Because your dentist ascribes to The Pankey Institute's Principles and Practices of Optimal Oral Health, the comprehensive examination you receive in this office may be unlike any you have received before.

Your dentist wants to know you as a unique individual and to examine you in such a way that you can discover together the aspects of your oral health and appearance that can be improved. You and your dentist will gain valuable insights as you talk about your past dental experiences and what you want for yourself. Hearing about your concerns and opinions will enable the dental team to help you achieve the results you want.

A complete clinical examination is accomplished with your help and input. Compre-

hensive clinical examinations are more thorough than the cursory check-up you may have come to expect. In order to reach a complete understanding of your present state of health, your dentist must gather data about your chewing muscles, jaw joints, and how your teeth come together against each other. Your dentist also must gather information about how these three components work together in your mouth.

Evaluating the health of your gums and other soft parts of your mouth is part of the process. Your dentist will be looking for signs of disease, oral cancer, and injury during this part of the exam. A complete assessment of the health of each individual tooth, as well as the condition of any existing restorations (such as fillings, crowns and bonding) or tooth replacements (such as dentures), is an integral part of the process. *(Continued)*

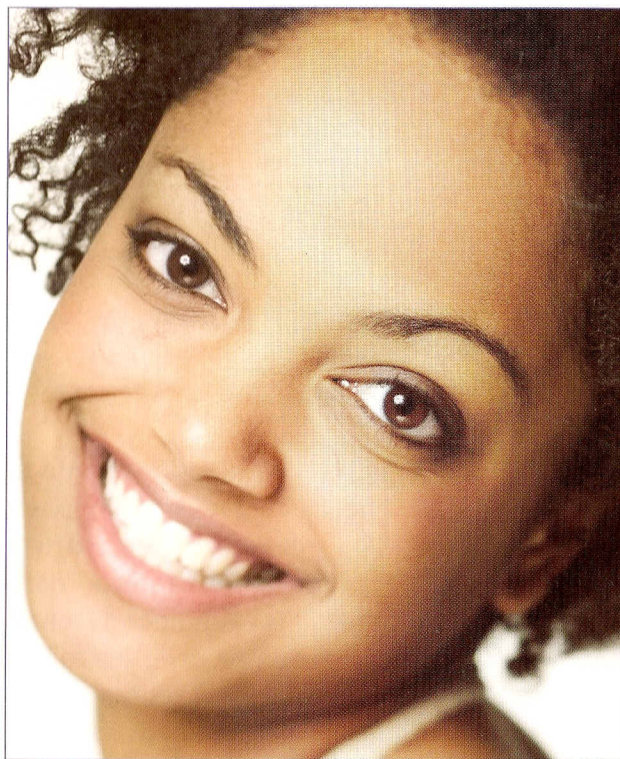


An esthetic evaluation is apt to be included. If you have expressed concern about the way your teeth look, you will have the opportunity to tour your mouth with your dentist and discuss each point of concern. In addition to examining your mouth with you, your dentist will suggest appropriate x-rays. These may include images of your teeth, entire jaw system, and if necessary, specific images of your jaw joints.

Diagnostic impressions of your upper and lower teeth will be made using an elastic material. These impressions are a mold into which special plaster material will be poured to make an accurate copy of your mouth. The resultant casts will be mounted on an articulator, which is an instrument that simulates how your teeth come together and move against each other as you bite and chew. A final step in gathering data is a complete set of close-up photographs of your teeth and face.

During this entire process, you and your dentist will be talking about each portion of the examination and what you are discovering. Your dentist will be actively listening for your questions, concerns, and opinions. Time will be taken to address them. You will be a collaborative member of your oral health team.

After the examination, before advising you on treatment, your dentist will take time, in solitude, to study all of the gathered information and form a thoughtful plan that addresses your concerns and any uncovered health problems. Your dentist invests substantial time in this



phase of the process, as well as tremendous care, knowledge and advanced technical training.

You will be invited to schedule a subsequent appointment to discuss the findings and how to best proceed with treatment that meets your goals and objectives. ■



*From the pages of*  
**ORAL HEALTH  
REPORT**

*A newsletter for the  
patients of Pankey Institute  
trained dentists*

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*The* **Comprehensive  
Co-Discovery  
Examination**

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