



INSIDE: Liberty churches share stories from Gulf Coast relief efforts, FAITH, B5

HEALTHCARE

For headaches, see your ... dentist?

By Natalie Shelton

Dr. Prabu Raman is proud he doesn't use all the examining rooms in his busy dental practice.

Like most dentists, he once spent his days filling cavities, performing root canals and examining teeth after cleanings. But his high patient base didn't afford him the opportunity to sit down with his patients and help them with his true passion — not just managing, but ending the suffering of patients with head and neck pain.

"We may not make as much financially here as we did, but now I primarily see people jaw alignment problems and aesthetic issues," he said, what changed was I wanted to devote myself to an area that truly makes a difference and where there aren't a lot of resources out there."

At the Raman Center for Advanced Dentistry, located on North Oak Trafficway, Raman specializes in temporomandibular dysfunction, better known as TMD, which is a misalignment of the jaws. He also focuses on ending headaches, migraines and jaw pain.

And in the process of helping more serious neuromuscular and orthodontic problems, he usually solves patients' cosmetic issues in the process by using aesthetic techniques to supplement treatment.

"They usually end up with prettier teeth even if that's not what they came here for," said

Raman, who opened The Raman Center in 1983.

Raman earned his doctorate degree from the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Dentistry, where he is an assistant clinical professor. His personal interest into rolling several medical specialties into one to solve patient problems has led him to study from a wide range of experts across the country.

"I find the experts in each area, the best in each group, and put them into my own little salad," said Raman, president-elect for the Greater Kansas City Dental Society.

His innovations and expertise in neuromuscular dentistry, functional orthodontics, and cosmetic and aesthetic dental services make him a highly sought-after speaker at conferences nationwide and in Canada.

In fact, he told his sister in Chicago that he was headed to Toronto to speak at a conference, and she asked more about his presentation. She was surprised, for she didn't realize her own brother was about the only neuromuscular dentist in the Midwest. Some of his patients hail from Wichita, Kan., Chicago and St. Louis.

He learned that his sister had had 20 years of headaches and had consulted with numerous medical and dental specialists. She suffered debilitating headaches whenever she went out in the sunlight, whenever she had a menstrual period and whenever she got hungry.

"After I realigned her bite, she went on a trip to Palm Springs, and on purpose she



NATALIE SHELTON/Sun Tribune Newspapers

Prabu Raman, a neuromuscular dentist, is shown with his patients' photos lining the walls of his neuromuscular dental practice on North Oak Trafficway. "I want to do something that when I'm gone, I'll actually be missed, so to speak," he said.

went on a golfing outing out in the sun, while she was on her period, and then purposefully got hungry," he said. "She said she tried to do everything she could to get a headache, but it didn't happen."

Rachel Cox of Gladstone, a nurse at Liberty Hospital, had already had surgery in which doctors broke her jaw and elongated her lower jaw to correct her bite before she learned about Raman's treatment for TMD.

"I went to see him because I felt like my jaw had locked open," she said. "I felt like I was in the worst pain ever."

With her treatment starting about a year ago, Cox now wears braces and a bite plate, and best of all, she says, she's pain free.

"I feel so much better," she said. "Your quality of life is just so much better if you're not in

pain."

Raman's office walls are filled with bright, smiling faces of his patients, professional-quality pictures he's taken himself in a small studio in his office. One is a woman who had six surgeries before using Raman's non-surgical approach, which includes veneers and orthodontic procedures.

He first screens patients using a machine similar to an EKG to study nerve activity.

"I have to see first if the symptoms they're describing can be attributed to the problem I can correct," he said. "It's like the anecdote about the man going to the doctor and saying, 'Doc, I heard you're the best doctor.' And his reply: 'Well, I hope you have what I'm the best at.'"

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