



# Je-Nel Gibbs, D.M.D., of Tranquility Dental

by pamela hammonds | photography by wendolin mercado

Recent academic studies and news articles have unveiled scary scenarios about serious health issues—even deaths—that have been linked to poor oral hygiene. We recalled seeing a commercial for Tranquility Dental addressing this very issue.

Je-Nel Gibbs, D.M.D., of Tranquility Dental in McKinney, not only runs a successful dental practice, she also spent large parts of her training in a hospital, routinely treating patients in the operating room and trauma center. She continues to keep up with research and follow reporting on health issues as they relate to dental disease.

**LIVING MAGAZINE:** Some people think of a cavity as something they can put off until later. When it starts to hurt, isn't that when we need to get it fixed?

**DR. GIBBS:** No. The big issue used to be, left untreated, you'd risk destroying tooth structure, eventually leading to more dental work or loss of the tooth. However, the bigger concern is that decay in the teeth or having gum disease is not solely about forming cavities, having bad breath, or having a not-so-attractive smile.

*Understanding  
the Oral-Systemic  
Connection.*

**This Dentist Can  
Save Your Life.**



The bacteria in the mouth can actually pass through the blood to other organs and cause very serious health issues. This is referred to as the Oral-Systemic Connection.

**LM:** Can you explain the Oral-Systemic Connection?

**DR. GIBBS:** The Oral-Systemic Connection is the influence that the teeth, the gums and other parts of the mouth have on the whole body. Simply put, a cavity is caused by bacteria left on the tooth. Gum disease is caused by bacteria left in the gums. When enough bacteria are present and the body cannot protect itself anymore, an infection develops. This infection is the cavity. These bacteria, which are strong enough to infect and decay one of the strongest substances in your body (teeth), can also travel through the blood to other parts of the body. Oral bacteria have been found in the heart, lungs, brain, kidneys, liver and other organs. While those organs are equipped to fight infections, they're not used to seeing oral bacteria, so often times they don't react well.

New cases from around the world continue to be reported. Newborns have died from the oral infection likely having traveled from the mothers' cavities to the fetuses. There have also been cases of children and adults with untreated cavities or gum disease who have become very ill and died from bacterial meningitis, pneumonia and heart failure.

And that's only the first part of the problem. With high amounts of bacteria present, especially in our gums, our bodies produce elevated amounts of C-Reactive Protein or CRP.

**LM:** So CRP is not the same as the actual bacteria in our mouth?

**DR. GIBBS:** No, CRP is a protein in our body that gets higher as more inflammation is present. High CRP levels from oral inflammation have been linked to rheumatoid arthritis, diabetes, heart diseases, complications of pregnancy,

colon cancer, formation of blood clots, obesity, respiratory disease, damaged heart valves, endocarditis, Alzheimer's, osteoporosis, and even erectile dysfunction.

**LM:** What are you doing in your office that might be different from other dentists in regard to this concern?

**DR. GIBBS:** My associate, Dr. Matt, and I take the Oral Systemic Relationship very seriously and expect our patients to do so as well. In fact, we encourage our patients to check our website at TDGibbs.com and click on "check the facts" and "educational videos." There they can see what research and studies we have compiled in order to better educate themselves on these and other issues. We regularly communicate with a patient's medical doctors to ensure the patient is not at risk from oral infection. We spend the time needed to help each patient understand the important relationship with the oral cavity and any existing medical conditions. We expect patients to follow through on recommended treatment to help reduce infection, and to care for their oral health at home as instructed. We agree that everyone wants a beautiful smile and white teeth; however, we also recognize that oral health is more than cosmetic.

I keep myself and my staff informed about the ongoing research with regards to my patients' health. We are working with more medical doctors who recognize the seriousness of oral infection and require dental clearance before proceeding with certain procedures. As more research is completed, I expect the findings will be even more shocking than they already are.

**LM:** In this economy, there may be people with concerns about the cost of having regular dental care or parents who make sure their children go to the dentist but put off their own visits.

**DR. GIBBS:** Most importantly, patients should recognize the seriousness, potential risks and health concerns poor oral hygiene poses in both their and their families' lives. We are in network with most insurance companies, which is a tremendous discount. Plus we offer zero percent financing for qualified patients.

**LM:** Do you treat all ages?

**DR. GIBBS:** Absolutely. I have two children, ages four and five, so I know how to relate to young patients. I treat all my patients, young and old, as I would want my family treated. We also make appointments available after hours or on Monday when the office is closed to accommodate patients.

I enjoy educating patients about their health and treating any dental conditions. My staff and I work together to fix problems but also teach our patients how they can prevent them from happening again. It's a partnership we're proud to be a part of. 🦷

*Tranquility Dental, P.A.*

6717 Eldorado Pkwy., Suite 100 | McKinney, Texas 75070

972-540-6200 | TDGibbs.com

*In network with most insurances*

Open Tuesday through Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.