

BEST BET | 3/3: 2018 KIDFITSTRONG FITNESS CHALLENGE *Piedmont Park, 10 AM-6 PM, FREE*

# Smyrna-based dentist celebrates 30 years

BY TIANNA FAULKNER

The Atlanta Voice

Celebrating his 30 years of practicing dentistry in Atlanta, Dr. David Lamothe, DDS—owner of Smyrna Dental and Implant Center—is helping to keep metro Atlanta smiles beautiful one mouth at a time.

Just one of nearly 300 African-American dentists in Atlanta, Lamothe has distinguished himself from would-be competitors with his exclusive “headache” therapy, where he treats patients for migraines, tinnitus, vertigo, tension type headaches, as well as face, jaw and neck pain due to dental health and problems in the mouth.

Lamothe has served communities in Riverdale, southwest Atlanta, East Cobb, and now Smyrna. In addition to the general dental services at his practice, Lamothe for the past two years has been using a drug free, needle free, and pain free therapy that offers long lasting pain relief for his patients.

Hundreds and thousands of people think their migraines or neck pains can be resolved if they go to a chiropractor for example, but they are often misdiagnosed and just given a prescription which only temporarily gives pain relief, according to Lamothe.

“They need a dentist, not a neurologist, chiropractor, or optometrist,” he said. “People suffer from head and neck pain that come in several forms. TMJ or tibular mandibular joint disorder, which is linked to migraine headaches, researchers have found within the past seven to eight years, come from a bite imbalance.”

When a person’s teeth are out of balance, perhaps from the result of one tooth longer than the rest of the teeth; when they close, it’s not evenly distributed; the person is biting down and

continue to chew over time.

Doing so, puts the tibular mandibular joint (located in the head between the ears) in an improper or imbalanced position. This joint is the most sensitive joint in the body, Lamothe said.

“It sends signals to the rest of the muscles to find a spot that is comfortable, which is what grinding is (scientifically known as ‘bruxism.’),” he explained. “Bruxism is all of those muscles constantly moving trying to find a comfortable spot and you end up wearing the teeth down or breaking teeth and dental work in the mouth.”

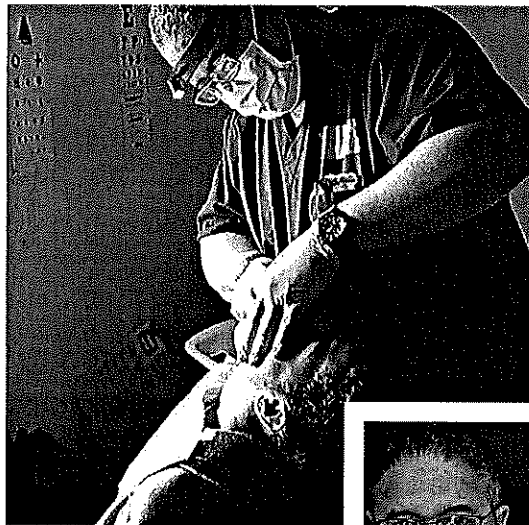
When those muscles are overworked, they build up trigger points and scar tissue. They then start to hurt, sending pain to the head and neck — that is where the headaches come from.

“What we do is go in and treat the muscles. The muscles are overworked and damaged,” Lamothe said. “We use cold laser, we use ultrasound, we use micro current and use some manual manipulation to work out the trigger points to break up the scar tissue to get rid of some of the inflammation that’s going on in some of those muscles and in the joint.

“It’s similar to being in a spa but it’s actually therapy,” Lamothe said. “In a spa it’s more massage. We’re using more medically advanced things to treat the condition, similar to physical therapy.

“We heal the muscles and get the muscles quiet and then we go in and use digital bite sensors that can tell us where the imbalance is in the bite,” Lamothe explained further. “We make adjustments to get the bite back in balance. When the bite is in balance and the teeth are hitting like they should, then the joint is in balance.”

While only dentists are qualified to treat this condition, Lamothe is the only dentist in At-



Atlanta dentist, Dr. David Lamothe, DDS is the owner of Smyrna Dental and Implant Center, his exclusive “headache” therapy, where he treats patients for migraines, tinnitus, vertigo, tension type headaches. (COURTESY PHOTO)



lanta using this technology. So far he has treated 80 people and in 93 percent of those cases, he’s eliminated or improved their conditions among patients, whose ages range from late teens to seniors.

Lamothe said one of the biggest dentist myths around today is that dentistry is painful.

“You hear all of these horror stories that your friends tell you,” he said. “In actuality, we are in 2018. Just like every other industry, technology has made advancements in dentistry that has allowed us to deliver dentistry painlessly.”

He stated that it is not necessary for people to fear dentistry because they think dentistry is painful. Another myth people have is that dentistry is not affordable and they don’t value their dental health.

“If your toenail splits in half,

or you break your neck, you immediately go to a physician,” Lamothe said. “When your tooth breaks in half, as long as it’s not hurting you think it’s ok and you let it go on and on until it can’t be fixed and it has to be taken out.”

Lamothe graduated in 1988 from the University of Texas, dental school in Houston, Texas, to become a dentist, mainly because of his father who was a physician. Lamothe wanted to do something in healthcare, but not practice in small town medicine like his father.

“(Dentistry) gave me the opportunity to work in the medical field, but also use my artistic talent,” Lamothe said. “I have an artistic gene that is very strong and being a dentist gives me a chance to use my scientific side.”

Historically, there is evidence

that African people have been practicing dentistry going all the way back to ancient civilization in Egypt according to Dr. Lamothe.

“More recently throughout history, black dentists started out as barbers,” Lamothe said. “Our history goes way back.

“They were doing extractions. Black dentists have always been in Atlanta,” he said. “Before integration, black dentists were only permitted to study dentistry at Meharry College in Nashville, Tennessee or Howard University in Washington D.C.”

February has been National Children’s Dental Health Month. Lamothe urges parents to get in the habit of caring for their children’s teeth when the children are just babies. “Great dental health begins in early childhood when a baby grows teeth,” he said.

“The first sign of a tooth, the parents need to clean the baby’s teeth with a washcloth and should not put babies to bed with bottles with anything other than water,” Lamothe continued. “Parents tend to use Kool-aid, cola, and even milk. All of those things are sugar based. The bacteria in their mouths will feed on the sugars, creating acid which brings decay.”

As children get older, parents have to be responsible and teach their children how to brush and are brushing correctly and thoroughly to get rid of plaque, which causes cavities.

Children and adults should visit the dentist every six months. Great dental health and habits early in life will turn into great dental health and habits into adulthood which should be the goal. Gum disease is the number one reason people lose teeth, not decay.

“It has been proven that there is a link between gum disease and heart disease and diabetes,” he said.