

From one generation to the next, dental care changes

18 May 2012, By Serena Gordon, HealthDay Reporter

(HealthDay) -- Stephanie Crowe, a mother of three from Croton-on-Hudson, N.Y., still remembers dreading a visit to the dentist as a young girl. It was often a painful experience, and her family's dentist showed little empathy to his smallest patients.

When Crowe had her first child, she brought her to the dentist that she and her husband were seeing at the time, and was surprised that the dentist suggested she take her young daughter to a [pediatric dentist](#) instead.

"He actually said, 'I don't think I can work with her.' It was like he didn't want to deal with kids," Crowe recalled. "But I'm glad because it got us to a dentist the kids liked better. It was more like going to a pediatrician's office."

It also was a bit fortuitous because her third child, son Justin, ended up needing a lot of dental work.

"He was just 2 or 3 when he needed his first [root canal](#)," Crowe said. "I was shocked when I was brushing his teeth and I saw a hole in his tooth. He's just much more prone to [cavities](#) than my other two children."

Some of the treatments now offered by her kids' dentist weren't available when Crowe was young. She said all of her children had [dental sealants](#) on their back teeth to help prevent decay. They also all get fluoride treatments whenever they get their teeth cleaned.

Like other parents, Crowe said, she brushed her kids' teeth for them when they were young, and once they were old enough to take care of their own teeth, she continued to remind them to brush. Her two oldest are 18 and 22, so they're on their own as far as their [oral hygiene](#) is concerned, but Crowe said she still has to remind her 13-year-old to brush his teeth.

All three children have had braces, and her oldest had her [wisdom teeth](#) removed recently.

"They weren't causing problems yet, but the dentist told me that if they came in more, it could cause her teeth to shift and ruin what had been done by her [braces](#)," she explained. For the same reason, she expects that her second son will probably have his wisdom teeth out soon.

Overall, Crowe said, her experiences with her children's dental health professionals have been much more positive than what she experienced as a child. And, she's glad her children don't have a lingering sense of trepidation about going to the dentist like she had.

More information: A companion article offers more on [what's new in pediatric dentistry](#).

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