

Patient information

The true cost of dentistry

It is interesting how often we hear people say: "I am looking for a reasonably priced dentist." Asking for a recommendation is laudable, and the price for dental treatment is an understandable aspect, but the matter is much more complex than the simple statement suggests. The first question is: what is reasonable? But the harder question is: compared to what?

There are so many different views and philosophies regarding dentistry that it is easy to get lost in a recommendation like: "You must see my dentist, he/she is very cheap."

At ER Dental we have given this topic a lot of thought.

To answer the first question, **what is reasonable**, we aim to base our prices on the average New Zealand prices as set out in the three-yearly price survey of the New Zealand Dental Association. For some of our procedures we charge even less than the New Zealand average.

We have invested in the latest technology and wouldn't consider ourselves an average practice. We probably rank in the country's top 10%. Nevertheless, we charge the average price to offer a fair proposition to our patients.

The second question, **compared to what**, calls for a deeper look at things.

When dentistry is discussed around the BBQ or on Facebook people use the words affordable or reasonable or even cheap. This is where differing philosophies in dentistry comes to play.

There is a term, supervised neglect, that comes to mind. While it sounds like a contradiction in terms, it is something we see a lot of, and we don't want any part of this dangerous approach.

In short it means that some dental professionals see certain problems in patients but only offer a sub-standard treatment option, or even do nothing. Some do this to avoid the – admittedly - unpleasant and painful discussion about money. Others feel that if they only offer a quick fix, they will be known as the reasonable or affordable dentist.

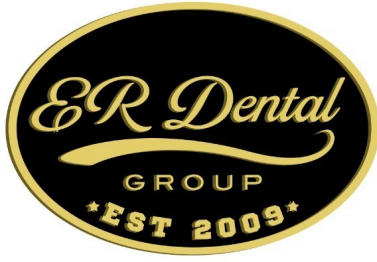
We have seen over many years what damage this can cause over time and how much it costs to fix the much bigger problems arising from this.

Our aim as healthcare professionals is to look at our patients holistically. We want to improve their oral health because we know how important the mouth

Your dentists
with a difference



www.erdental.co.nz



and teeth are for general health. This is exactly the opposite of the supervised neglect model.

Imagine you take your car to a tyre shop to fix a flat tyre. Say, they found the rubber is completely worn down with hardly any thread left, and there is a nail in the tyre. What if they only offer you a puncture patch and ignore the fact that the tyre is dangerous and can cause an accident? Would you consider them to be reasonable and affordable? Probably – hopefully – not. But for some reason people take this view when it comes to their teeth.

Our aim is to look after our patients and their long-term health. Therefore we spend an entire hour during a new-patient exam. We like to diagnose every problem we detect, and we take intra-oral photos to show our patients what we have found because seeing is believing. We take our time to explain exactly what we see, what is happening to the teeth and gums, and what can be done. Our aim is to discuss all treatment options. We will never not tell a patient if we see a problem. We discuss all treatment options with pros and cons of every option. We might even make a recommendation, but it is up to every patient to decide what treatment they want to do, or not to do any treatment at all.

The sad fact is that we have seen so many patients arrive at our doorstep with major oral health problems that they are unaware of. In such cases it is always difficult for us to break the bad news to them and to present ways to get things healthy again. But we have decided not to be part of the problem and do the easy thing, i.e. to turn a blind eye on lurking problems. Instead, we want to be part of a solution, and consequently we base our comprehensive treatment planning on this view.

Here is a link to a highly informative documentary that explains the connection between general health and dental health, and why it is important to apply a holistic approach when deciding on dental treatment.

[WATCH THIS VIDEO](#)

So, the short answers to the two difficult questions are:

We believe that by offering the New Zealand average price for world-class dentistry using the most up-to date equipment our prices are very reasonable.

We believe that discussing the true costs of a comprehensive treatment plan needed to restore optimal oral health and prevent future problems is the right, ethical, professional approach. To compare this to a quick fix, patch treatment is where the confusion can come in. Remember: comparing apples to oranges doesn't work. And price is not the same as value, especially if you take a long-term view so something as precious as health.

To see what difference our approach to dental treatment has made to people's lives, check out our online reviews across our clinics.

[FACEBOOK REVIEWS](#)

[GOOGLE REVIEWS](#)

**Your dentists
with a difference**



www.erdental.co.nz