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Laser Dentistry Revolution

PROCEDURES FASTER, MORE EFFICIENT AND PAINLESS | BY JOHN BYRD



Dr. Sharif, who has been practicing for 23 years, is a diplomate of the American Board of Pediatric Dentistry and an assistant professor at Howard University.

While laser dentistry has been offered by professionals for more than 15 years, relatively few patients are aware of the Fotona LightWalker, a universal laser system that has dramatically improved speed and efficiency in the execution of many commonly-needed treatments while reducing invasiveness and, of course, pain and discomfort.

The main reason the LightWalker laser technology isn't better known in northern Virginia, in fact, is because few local dentists actually have one. Apart from the required expense, gaining proficiencies in the relevant applications entails hours of specialized course work, culminating in a wholly new certification.

"This is an investment in staying ahead of evolving technologies," says Dr. Shohreh Sharif, who founded Greater Washington Dentistry and has specialized in pediatric dentistry for 23 years. "It's a big step forward for our profession that has quickly proven

invaluable to patients – young and old."

Dr. Sharif, who is a *Diplomate* on the American Board of Pediatric Dentistry and an assistant professor at the Howard University College of Dentistry, says the LightWalker's unique dual wavelength laser is particularly effective in restoring fillings, correcting "tongue-tie" (frenectomy), root canal treatments (endodontic therapy) and periodontal applications.

"Using the Fotona laser enables doctors to perform both hard and soft tissue procedures with a single piece of equipment," Dr. Sharif says. "Traditional laser machines can only do soft or hard tissue surgery – not both."

The Fotona's varied wavelengths allow for higher speed and less irritation to the tissues. This expedites the disinfection of fillings by killing germs as the surgery is being performed.

The LightWalker laser is also less invasive. There is



no cutting. Tissue is ablated, (gradually removed via a form of melting or evaporation). Many procedures can be executed without anesthesia.

“I can correct lip-tie or tongue-tie in young infants very quickly,” Dr. Sharif explains. “Children who are afraid of the drill will find a laser procedure with this machine easier to accept – even a kind of game. I call it: the laser tag game.”

The new technology also provides the perfect application for gingivoplasty (gum surgery) and for treatment of painful mouth sores such as cankers and fever blisters. “The LightWalker laser reduces ulcer duration and all the pain associated with lesions,” Sharif observes.

Where standard lasers are slow – often agonizing so – the LightWalker is time-efficient.

“Because there’s less heat to the tissue, there’s less pain and discomfort. This is a service direction for Greater Washington Dentistry that perfectly complements our multi-specialty approach to children’s oral healthcare needs...which always emphasizes experience, knowledge and caring.”

Adults, who can be equally anxious about dental procedures, appreciate the benefit of receiving very thorough treatments that don’t require sedation.

For new patients, Greater Washington Dentistry offers a low-cost initial evaluation that provides a detailed assessment of all available options.

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