

LOCAL STAR TREATMENT

Dear Dr. McCrummen: I understand that there are a few dentists that treat movie stars in the Flathead Valley. Would one of these dentists be good to go to for high quality dental care? My dental insurance is not very good. I would love to get an autograph from one in a waiting room and be able to sit and visit. Would that be appropriate? B.P.

That is a very interesting question! Many people in the movie industry live in this area. Producers, directors, editors, camera operators, script writers, grips, best boys, costumers, make-up artists, transportation technicians, set designers, as well as actors you may not recognize, stunt people, extras, and many more. Most of the people that work behind the scenes are the ones that make the movie great, but the "stars" get all of the glory. Many famous actors admit they are just ordinary people with a high profile job. They do not understand why they are treated like gods, but love the seven digit pay and the perks ("perks" is short for the word, perquisite).

The "stars" often choose their dentists like everyone else; they ask their friends who they recommend. Like most people, they expect friendly, caring dental personnel, pain-less injections, to be comfortable, treated well, and to look nice when they leave. Because of their income level they usually request the finest dentistry has to offer, and do not base their decisions on how much insurance pays. They are offered different options like everyone else, but usually choose the best, longest lasting, nicest looking option. Due to their scheduling they cannot always choose the best, or treatment may be started and they are unexpectedly called to work. Sometimes a crown (cap) must be shipped to a dentist "on location" to complete the procedure.

It is likely that most Flathead Valley dentists treat people in the movie industry. When a high profile celebrity comes to a dental office they are often shuffled away just so they can read a magazine in peace, avoiding "*People*". Otherwise, they are treated the same as everyone else. Whether we are treating a famous actor or a 'street person' there should be no difference in quality of care, but there may be a difference in treatment a person chooses based on finances and insurance limitations. If a movie star is considered the most deserving of high quality dental care then I consider all of my patients as stars. I believe most dentists feel that way.

In public, movie stars often experience total strangers acting like they know them personally. They can be understandably annoyed by people coming up to them to talk, asking for autographs, or pictures taken with them. Strangers do not usually go up to other strangers and act the same way. Most of the people in our area are respectful of celebrities and leave them alone. Jim Nabors welcomed conversation and autographs. Michael Douglas asked why people were ignoring him. Tom Selleck prefers to be left alone. You can usually tell if they are approachable by how they are acting. Unless they come up to you and start a conversation, or ask you for your autograph, it is best to let them have their personal space. Movie industry working hours are long and miserable so they all deserve some privacy, peace, and time alone with their families and friends.

Quality of care is something each dentist chooses. They base treatment and options on their initial education, experience, continuing education, extra training, and personal preferences. The type of equipment, dental materials, and techniques are unique to themselves. A "star" may easily be able to pay for the very best options available to enhance their dental appearance, rbut those options would also be available for you, too. You are a star in your own way and deserve equal treatment where ever you go.