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Justin PHILIPPINES

Best Dentists

We polled area dentists and asked: Who would you trust with your own family's teeth? Here are their choices for Washington's top general dentists, periodontists, orthodontists, and more.

[BY SHERRI DALPHONSE]

How did we put together this list of the area's top dentists? The way you might find a dentist: word of mouth. But we asked a lot of people—and we turned to experts.

We mailed surveys to 2,400 dentists in DC, Maryland, and Virginia and asked them to name the general dentists and specialists to whom they would send a member of their own family. We received 700 completed surveys.

The dentists who received the most recommendations from their peers are listed here. Those marked with an asterisk (*) are the top vote getters in each specialty.

Just because a dentist is not listed does not mean he or she is not good. How do good dentists get left off?

Dentists know one another through referral networks—a pediatric dentist may refer to a handful of orthodontists, and vice versa. Sometimes a dentist is too new to have established a referral network, is practicing in an out-of-theway location, or does not refer often, meaning other dentists are not familiar with his or her work. Dentists also make referrals to colleagues they like, people with whom they may play golf. Dentists who are not active in local dental circles are less well known.

To counter this, we did our own research, asking experts about good but overlooked dentists who are not part of the established network.

Although dentists on this list come highly recommended, that's no guarantee someone will be right for you. Dentists can judge a colleague's skill but, unless they get feedback from patients, do not always know if the dentist

has a good chairside manner, if the office staff is pleasant and efficient, and if prices are reasonable.

It's best to use this list as one tool. You might also ask friends, neighbors, and coworkers for names of dentists they like.

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Richard M. Blicher, downtown (C. 702-419)

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Good General Dentists

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Daniel J. Deutsch, downtown DC; 202-223-6630

Marc D. Doctors, downtown DC; 202-223-0029

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AMA, 703-308-3006

Brace Jay, Vennix, 703-603-0700 Boyl B. James, Controving, 703-607-60

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