

Caution Needed with Facebook Dental Articles

Submitted by:

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Facebook page articles and other social media outlets can be a useful source to learn about natural dental remedies, alternative products, and alternative treatment options. However, care must be taken when reading these articles and implementing recommendations because they can be deceptively inaccurate. Many of these Facebook page articles I am describing aren't discussing using an alternative toothpaste, for example, but making larger claims against the proven truths of dental health. This article is the first part of two that will help you, the reader, evaluate articles to determine the credibility of their claim. The next article will explore specific dental advice found on the internet.

Allow me to begin by clarifying my stance. My intention with discussing this subject is not to tell people how or what to think or use, but provide more information that will allow readers to make a more informed decision on their own. I am not putting down natural alternative sites. In fact, on a personal level, I am interested in natural alternatives and organic foods. I have read countless articles on the subject for myself and my family. I think having a forum to voice truths and provide viable, well-researched alternatives is definitely needed in our current state of healthcare.

However, great care must be afforded before implementing internet dental advice. I have discovered from reading many of these dental related Facebook page posts, that some of their dental claims are unfounded and not backed by quality research even though the article may appear scholarly and well-written. Even worse, some articles will site credible evidence, but they distort the findings of the research to support their claim. This is unfortunate because it is taking advantage of people's good nature to try to improve their oral health for the benefit of their site.

When evaluating a healthcare claim, it is important to evaluate the evidence that is cited in the article, if any. Take the time to read the actual research and determine if the research proves the claim in the article. Lastly, search for other research that has proven the same claim. In addition, other points to consider are the quality of the research, and if a corporate sponsor paid for the research to be conducted.

Interestingly, many of these Facebook pages that post these unsubstantiated claims typically have many advertisements associated with them. This shouldn't be surprising. The more sensational the headline, the more clicks it will receive, which adds up to more advertising dollars. Readers, myself included, are enticed to click the link in a Facebook timeline when the article states, "What Your Dentist Doesn't Want You to Know: Heal Cavities at Home". Had I missed something in all the research articles I

had read?! Nope. Just another outlandish claim from a site that is worried more about their bottom line than the oral health topics the site claimed to be concerned about.

The healthcare landscape has become increasingly difficult to navigate with information and advice coming at you from all directions. I would always recommend exploring ways to improve your oral health as well as your systemic health by changing your diet and the products you may use. However, I would place a premium on verifying and reading the sources stated in these articles. I would give this same advice even if it's from a celebrity physician seen on television. If you have questions about certain dental internet claims, I would recommend discussing them with your dentist. Stay Healthy!

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