



MEDICAL profiles



Utah Valley Periodontics

Dr. Alex Bankhead D.D.S., M.S. • 1375 E. 800 North, Ste. 104, Orem • (801) 221-7799 • www.perioviews.com

Surrounded by constant teeth talk by the six dentists in his family, it's no surprise Dr. Alex Bankhead took the dental route — with a twist.

“Coming from a family of dentists, I pretty much knew what dentistry was all about, but I found periodontics to be captivating and mentally stimulating,” Dr. Bankhead says. “You get to be creative every day.”

Dr. Bankhead received his bachelor's from Weber State University and his dental degree from Creighton University in Omaha, Neb. He then furthered his education and received his master's in periodontics at University of Nebraska Medical College.

Being a periodontist allows Dr. Bankhead to improve the quality of life for his patients through bone grafting, gum grafting, cosmetic

surgery and dental implants.

Dr. Bankhead and his staff do five or six surgeries a day, which gives him a daily reminder of the lack of knowledge about gum care. Our gums, Dr. Bankhead says, are as thin as a paper towel and need to be treated gently because when gum recession occurs, people lose teeth.

Gums don't automatically have to recede when you reach your senior years. Dr. Bankhead has 80-year-old patients whose gums haven't receded and patients who are 8 whose gums have receded.

You just need to be careful, Dr. Bankhead says.

“It's depressing to me when we have a patient come in — never had a cavity or filling — and they're losing teeth. The big question is, ‘How did this happen? How did I lose a tooth that's never had a cavity?’” he says.

Dr. Bankhead has performed more than 15,000 gum grafts for patients whose gums have receded.

To preserve healthy gums, Dr. Bankhead urges his patients to brush at the gum line where bacteria stimulates gum recession and weakens the bone underneath.

“Gum recession happens painlessly so you may not even know this is happening,” he says. “When you've lost so much bone your teeth start to sway, then you're made aware. But at that time it's usually too late.”

free medical advice

Always use a soft-head toothbrush. The medium and hard bristles will scrub away the gum tissue, leading to unnecessary tooth loss.