

DREAMING YOUR WAY TO A BETTER SMILE

New trend in sedation dentistry appeals to business people and those afraid of the dentist.

By **JOSHUA TEHEE**
STAFF WRITER

William Netzley swears when he was 12 years old, his dentist climbed up on the chair, placed a knee on his chest and yanked out a tooth.

It's the kind of memory that can create lifelong fear, says Netzley, who has built a dental practice dedicated to helping those afraid to sit in his chair.

At Fresno Dental Care, that fear can be intense. "They may get to the parking lot and can't get from their car to the office. That's the kind of phobia we're talking about," Netzley says of his patients. He estimates 50 percent of people go to the dentist only when absolutely necessary.

Warren Powell hadn't been in 20 years.

The Clovis resident came to Netzley's office only after cracks in his teeth caused by old fillings became unbearable. He remembers vividly the dental visits from his past. "Tears are rolling down your cheeks and they have to go back in and work on you and they give you some more shots and pretty soon it's like, 'Knock me out,'" he says.

In a sense, that's what Netzley does.

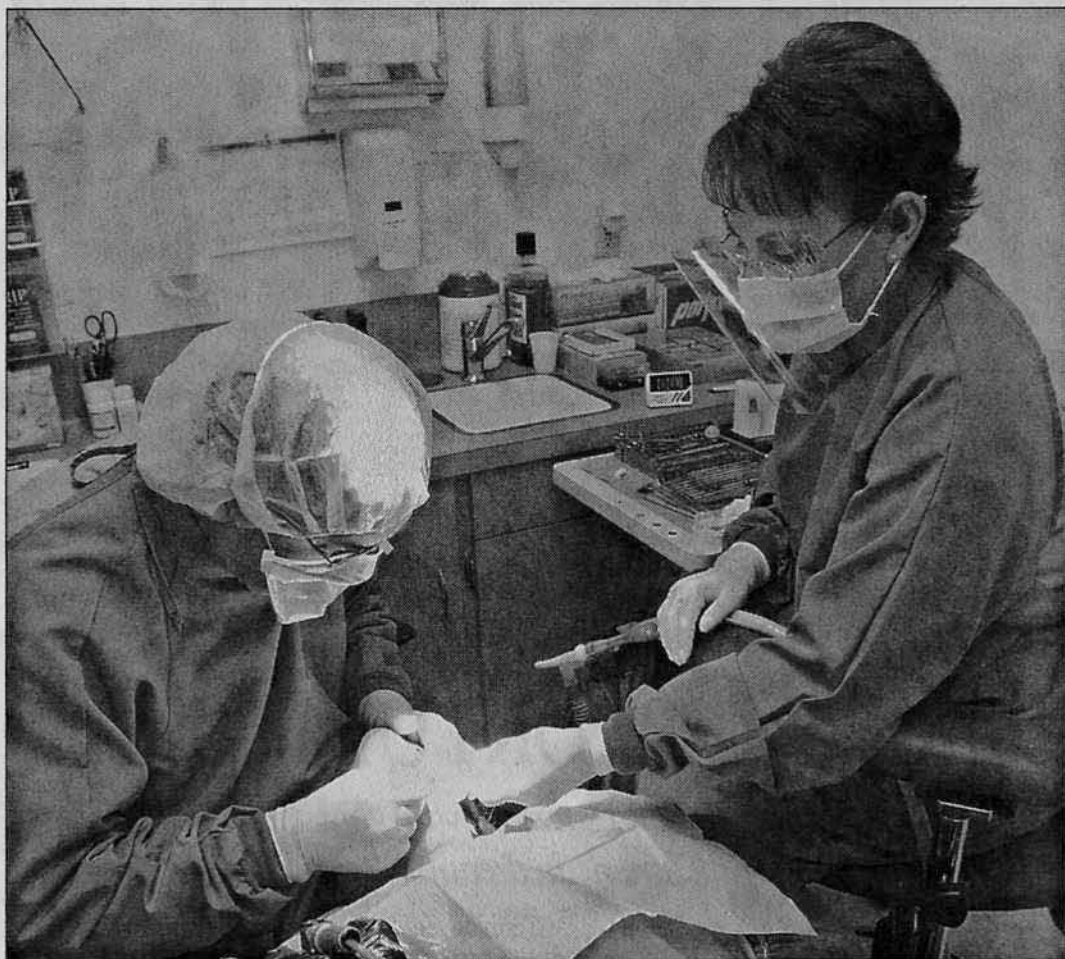
Netzley specializes in oral sedation dentistry.

Patients pop a little blue pill that makes them so relaxed many times they leave with little recollection of their visit.

"It's not like a regular dentist. They don't put you in a chair and poke you full of needles," says Powell, who is sedated for all his dentistry including simple teeth cleaning.

Instead, patients take one pill at home. They become drowsy. A friend or family member brings them to Netzley's office where they take another pill. Within an hour they fall into that super-relaxed state, which allows Netzley to work on them with no pain or fear.

Numbing agents like Novocain and nitrous oxide may kill the pain, but they



SCOTT ADAMS — CITYVIEW

Dr. William Netzley, left, and dental assistant Amanda McMinn work on patient Stella Torres. Torres is consciously sedated and is having a lot of dental work done at one time to avoid the pain and the time necessary to return over several visits to complete the work.

can't do much about the fear factor, Netzley says. "My patients have nitrous oxide and they're still sitting there with a white-knuckled grip on the chair."

In his chair now, Stella Torres makes snoring sounds.

But she's not asleep, Netzley says. "See how she responds," he says, urging Torres to open wider. She does.

"She's actually conscious." Netzley is bonding in place Torres' new porcelain teeth. The procedure will take the

majority of the day. After, Torres will be taken home to sleep it off.

Tomorrow she will remember little about the visit, Netzley says.

Procedures like this would normally take several visits to correct, but can be done in a single day with sedation dentistry. Netzley can fill several cavities, even do several root canals in a single day. Normally that kind of work would be scheduled over weeks. "Businessmen love to come in, take one day off

work, get all their dentistry down and be back at work the next day," Netzley says.

All of this comes at a cost that can be well above normal dentistry, Netzley says. But it's well worth the money, says Powell, though he doesn't know how much it costs, really.

Then again, he doesn't really care. "It works for me. It doesn't matter what it costs," he says.

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