

## YOUR DENTIST CAN SAVE YOUR LIFE

# Can meditation prevent diseases?

With everyone focused today on avoiding sickness and staying healthy, we hear a lot about the importance of diet and exercise. And these are the cornerstones of good physical health — along with making good life choices. In a recent feature we discussed the relationship between maintaining a healthy nervous system and a strong immune system. There is another avenue of maintaining optimum health we should not overlook.

## Meditation.

It may sound too “mystical” to be plausible. And yet, there is sound evidence that meditation can heal both the body and mind. Studies are confirming that just 20 minutes each day meditating can dramatically improve your health. Certainly, good news for those feeling the seeming unrelenting pressures of modern life.

Meditation is a mind and body practice with a long history that creates calmness and physical relaxation. It's been shown to improve our mental state and help us better cope with

illness and enhance our overall health and sense of well-being. It can be helpful for a variety of conditions, such as high blood pressure, certain psychological disorders, and even pain. Although it is unclear why, studies are showing that meditation also strengthens the immune system — while improving our ability to concentrate! There are multiple forms of meditation.



**Dr. Gabrielle F. Cannick**

What they have in common are a narrowing of focus that shuts out the external world and stills the body. Those who meditate regularly for six weeks show improved immune systems and less emotional distress, a known contributor to many modern health problems. Scientists are not sure what happens in meditation that effects the brain and immune

system, but an increased electrical activity in regions of the left frontal lobe have been noted, an area more active in optimistic people.

How do you learn to meditate? There are dozens of techniques and disciplines available. The basics include: • **Focusing Mind:** it is normal for your mind to be active when you are meditating. The key is to acknowledge this while focusing on controlling your breathing. • **Being in the Now:** Rather than focusing on the past or future, meditation is about focusing on the present. Focusing on the here and now takes practice. That's because many of us live most of our lives thinking ahead to the future — or reliving the past. • **Practicing a “quiet mind”:** Relax and let go. Studies show this can produce feelings of happiness and positive thoughts and emotions.

Meditation takes practice. It is important to keep trying until something feels right for you. Also, there may be classes locally you can

attend, and there are a number of free online apps to choose from. Final word: Be thankful for each day. Take a deep breath; all will be well. Call with questions. We are your hometown resource for guidance and support.

*Dr. Gabrielle F. Cannick is the owner of Grand Oaks Dental, located at 3905 Liberty Highway in Anderson. A strong believer that dental fear and anxiety should not prevent any patient from receiving the highest quality dental care, Dr. Cannick has received extensive training in Sedation Dentistry and is a certified member of the Dental Organization for Conscious Sedation. She is also a member of the South Carolina Dental Association, the American Dental Association, the Academy of General Dentistry, and the American Academy of Dental Sleep Medicine. For more information about Grand Oaks Dental and the services provided, please call 864-224-0809, or click to [grandoaks-dental.com](http://grandoaks-dental.com) or visit us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/GrandOaksDental>.*



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