

Putting Patients First



At High and Pickett Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, quality patient care is the foundation of every successful surgery.

When mentoring oral surgery residents at the University of Tennessee (UT) Medical Center, Dr. William High and Dr. David Pickett, board-certified oral and maxillofacial surgeons, stress one principal: good communication.

"Can you talk to a patient? Communication is the key to establishing good patient care," Dr. High says. "Building relationships with patients and families is critical."

That approach has defined the practice, High and Pickett Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, since 1979. From extractions and implants to post-traumatic facial reconstruction, the surgeons provide skillfully executed elective and emergency surgeries in a personalized environment.

"What we do is not the easiest thing for patients to bear," says Dr. High.

"It's critical that we have honest and caring conversations with them every step of the way to ensure they understand everything," Dr. Pickett adds.

A Values-Driven Practice

When Dr. High left Auburn, Alabama, to attend UT, he was a track and field recruit who would later become a six-time all-American hurdler with two world records and an Olympic trial under his belt.

Yet, Dr. High knew there was life beyond the track. "I've always loved helping people, so I pursued



Dr. William High



Dr. David Pickett

dentistry," he says. After obtaining his D.M.D. from the University of Alabama, he returned to UT for his oral and maxillofacial surgery residency.

Years later, Dr. High mentored Dr. Pickett, who joined the practice in 2013. Dr. Pickett's father was a general dentist, and his son started down a similar path. "Then I found surgery, and it was a step above," he says. "When you find a career you love, it doesn't feel like work."

Completing his residency at the UT Medical Center, Dr. Pickett has won numerous awards, including a Guardian Angel award for outstanding patient care and compassion.

Dr. High and Dr. Pickett's partnership thrives on a shared philosophy of putting patients first. "Our goal is to make each procedure as easy as possible on the patient," says Dr. Pickett. "That's how we show our compassion."

Exceptional Patient Experience

Patients visiting the office will encounter a clean, welcoming space staffed by friendly professionals. The practice offers in-office IV anesthesia for healthy patients and a range of elective procedures—from frenectomies for newborns to implants for all ages. The team also provides low-cost and pro bono dental services to people in need.

Both doctors operate at nearby hospitals on patients with complicated conditions and maxillofacial damage from traumatic events, including dog bites, car wrecks, and gunshots. These patients require more than just a steady hand. "We're acutely aware of the trauma they've experienced," Dr. High says. "We're there for them emotionally as we put them back together."

"This is highly personal work," adds Dr. Pickett. "As oral surgeons, we work where people look 90% of the time. It's a joy to see how far patients go after we reconstruct them."

For Dr. High, one of the greatest rewards is seeing a patient of 30 years walk through the door with their kids.

"Treating generational patients makes me happy," he says. "It's a pat on the back."



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