**What Do Dentists Do?**
Services include the following:
Comprehensive New Patient Exams
Preventative Dental Care/Cleanings
Facial Pain
Restorative Dentistry (fillings)
Bridges, Veneers, and Implants
Children's Dentistry
Cosmetic Dentistry
Partials, Dentures and Implant Dentures
Endodontic Therapy (root canals)
Oral Surgery (extractions)
After-Hour Emergencies

**Comprehensive New Patient Exams**
Dr. Walker wants to learn about new patients, both their interests and their oral health history, and additional time provided for these appointments allows this personal interaction. The comprehensive exam is our opportunity to determine what you need, by listening to your goals and using what we observe in your mouth, to create an encompassing treatment plan.

A treatment plan will be different for everyone since individuals have had different life experiences and have different expectations and desires for their oral health.  At this appointment, we will take all pertinent X-rays and gather the information we need to determine how to reach your goals.  In certain cases, we may invite you back for a treatment consult to make sure we provide you with all available options.  The comprehensive exam is our dental team’s chance to ‘get to the root of the matter!’

**Preventive Dental Care/Cleanings**
The dental cleaning, or prophy, is quite possibly the most important dental treatment you can receive!  A cleaning can range from a simple prophy to an extensive scale and root planing (also called a deep cleaning).  Everyone’s cleaning is specialized according to their periodontal condition.  If a patient has very little build-up (tartar or calculus), along with very little bleeding and no bone loss, a simple prophy may be all he or she needs.  However, if there is more bleeding when the patient flosses or brushes, large amounts of build-up and associated bone loss, this means your periodontal condition is more involved.  After treatment and improved home health care, your mouth can return to a healthy state!  At the cleaning appointment, the doctor and hygienist set up the appropriate amount of time between cleanings best suiting your needs, whether that be 3, 4, or 6 months.  We have patients request to come in more frequently because they love the fresh, clean feeling!  Plus, recent research provides evidence of the connection between your overall health and your oral health - so let's keep those teeth and gums healthy!

**Restorative Dentistry (fillings)**
Tooth decay (cavities) may necessitate the need for a filling.  Our office offers many different types of materials for fillings.  Amalgam fillings are very serviceable but only in certain situations and areas.  The most common fillings performed in our office are composite restorations, known as the ‘white’ fillings.  Composites are very functional and are getting better every year with advanced technologies and bonding agents.  Another ‘white’ option is glass ionomer filling material, as it has many exceptional qualities.  However, glass ionomers are not very strong so they cannot be used on the biting surface.  Our office uses only the best and proven materials to restore your teeth, enabling you to rest assured we will not cut corners with lesser materials.  We only use what we would want in our own teeth!  If you require a filling, the doctor indicates what he think would work best, but the choice is always yours!

Cavities which are not treated early can lead to root canals or even loss of teeth. Often, a cavity is discovered during a routine cleaning and exam.  X-rays are helpful in diagnosing a cavity between the teeth. Our goal is to find and restore teeth before decay leads to painful symptoms.

**Crowns, Bridges, and Veneers**
Crowns, also called caps, are a full coverage restoration of a tooth deemed too weak or susceptible to fracture.  In some instances, the tooth has already fractured and needs to be restored to its original form to preserve the occlusion.  Once a posterior tooth has had endodontic treatment (root canal), it becomes brittle and must be protected from fracturing or splitting.  By placing a crown, the biting force is distributed along the entire tooth instead of concentrating on weak spots of the tooth.  Crowns are available in various types of materials, and again, your doctor will help you select a gold or porcelain crown, including the many options of porcelain available today.

Bridges are the conventional way to replace a missing tooth.  With a bridge, both teeth on either side of the empty space are prepared to receive the bridge, which is cemented in place at a subsequent visit.  A bridge is basically three or more crowns made at the same time and attached as one piece.  A bridge gives the appearance of a full dentition, filling in the space of a missing tooth.

Veneers are thin porcelain restorations bonded to the front of teeth to help correct fractured teeth, intrinsic staining, natural spaces between teeth, or overly worn incisal edges.  Veneers usually require very little removal of the natural tooth structure and are strong enough to last a long time with proper care.

All of these procedures generally require two appointments.  The first appointment is the longest and consists of preparing the teeth, taking an impression of these teeth, and fabricating and cementing a temporary crown, bridge or veneer.  Also, a shade of your teeth will be selected and all necessary photographs will be taken to communicate with the lab to ensure the finished product looks as natural as possible.  At the second appointment, the temporary will be removed, and the final restoration will be tried in and adjusted until the patient is comfortable with the occlusion and appearance.  Finally, the restoration is bonded into place with cement and checked for a final fit.  We strive for perfection and occasionally it will be necessary to send the case back to the lab for minor adjustments before we permanently deliver it in place.

**Implants**
Implants are rapidly becoming the preferred choice to replace a missing tooth. Implants ‘keep a one tooth problem a one tooth problem’ instead of involving both teeth on either side as with a bridge.  It saves considerable reduction of the adjacent teeth.  An implant is placed into the bone, and an abutment and crown are later attached after the implant is ready and the dentition is restored.

At our office, we perform nearly all our implant procedures, including the surgical placement of the implant.  This saves our patients from being referred to a specialist and is generally less expensive.

**Children's Dentistry**
We love to treat patients of all ages, including children!  Children should be taught the basics of proper oral care.  Our loving staff can provide your child the knowledge they will need to have a beautiful smile!   We have a simple philosophy with kids - to treat them like they are our own.  Dr. Walker cares for as many kids as possible but also realizes the occasional need to refer to a pediatric dentist.  We want kids to enjoy the dental office and to be comfortable for years to come.  Additionally, we encourage children to receive sealants on their new, adult teeth.

**Cosmetic Dentistry**
Cosmetic dentistry pertains to making the smile appear more aesthetically pleasing.  With advancements in tooth whitening and dental implants, an unpleasant or aging smile can be transformed into a beautiful smile!  We will help select the best aesthetic solution for you, ranging from veneers, bonding, crowns, or bleaching.  We offer at-home whitening trays as well as ZOOM whitening, an almost immediate-result, in-office procedure.  Often, all you need is to whiten your teeth to create an amazing smile!  Additionally, before any cosmetic procedures are performed, Dr. Walker will make sure your overall foundation is in good shape before creating your bright smile.

**Partials, Dentures and Implant Retained Dentures**
Removable partials and dentures are good alternatives to bridges and implants to help replace missing teeth.  Complete dentures can replace an entire arch, while a partial can help replace various teeth around your mouth.  Commonly, denture adhesive is needed to help hold these in place, as they are supported by the gums and surrounding teeth.  Also, implants can be placed to help hold in the appliances.  An anchor is placed on top of the implant that ‘snaps’ into the appliance and can provide much needed stability to a loose denture or partial.

**Endodontic Therapy (root canals)**
Root canals alleviate pain and restore a damaged tooth, whether it is from decay or an injury.  A root canal consists of removing the damaged or infected pulp, cleaning the inside of the tooth, and filling the inner tooth so an infection cannot become re-established.  We try to treat most root canals in our office, but we also realize there are times to refer to a specialist if there is any question about the longevity of the affected tooth.

**Oral Surgery**
An extraction is sometimes indicated for orthodontic reasons, for crowded or impacted third molars (wisdom teeth), or for seriously decayed teeth.  Our office will remove these teeth comfortably, or refer you to an oral surgeon where this can be completed at your convenience.  We work with your insurance company and find your best option, whether it be in town or to a participating provider.

Also, from time to time, patients need treatment after suffering from a traumatic incident (sporting events, accidents, or just bad luck).  We are well-educated in helping treat these patients and have been pleasantly surprised by the body’s ability to heal, given the proper environment.  If you have had a traumatic experience, including having a tooth knocked out or have broken bones in your mouth, it is very important to call immediately so we can replace the teeth (if applicable) as soon as possible.  Time is of the essence in a traumatic incident.