

An Open Letter to Michael Phelps...

Dear Michael (or should I say, Mr. Phish),

First off...Congratulations! You have accomplished quite a feat. I imagine that your back may already be a bit sore from all of that gold hardware around your neck. I'm glad to see that all of your hard work has paid off. It is always a pleasure to witness success.

I'm fairly sure that this letter will never find its way poolside, but I'm writing anyways. Perhaps, somewhere out there, you may run into a dentist or a doctor that can present to you what I have to say.

Mike, I would like to talk to you about your teeth. Now I full realize that you have recently supplanted George Clooney as the most sought after bachelor in America, so I'm certainly not going to tout what a prettier smile could do for your social life. No, I'm actually going to try to make you a better swimmer, simply by fixing your teeth and jaws. Actually, I'm going to do you one better and send you to my wife (she's much prettier and smells much better than I do) to get you straightened out.

You see, Mr. Phelps, your picture has been splashed onto the cover of every magazine in America. You've been interviewed thousands of times. You are an international star. I've heard you talk (a nasally tone) and have seen your mouth from all sorts of angles. Every time I see a close up of your bite I am even more amazed at your athletic feats.

Michael, I'm sorry to say this, but the way your teeth are lined up in your jaws has caused you to have what we call an airway issue. Your upper jaw (arch) is too narrow for your face and therefore, your teeth cannot rest in a straight line. The funny thing about your jaws is that they are the entrance to your airway and can have a profound effect on the size of your sinuses, as well as how much air gets to your lungs. In other words, we can help you to get more air into your lungs and possibly more gold around your neck.

I've heard that you were diagnosed with ADHD at a young age. There's a good chance that your bite contributed to this. Many kids who are diagnosed with ADHD have airway issues. If you cannot get air to your lungs (via your mouth and sinuses) while sleeping, you do not sleep very well. If a kid doesn't get a good night's sleep, they tend to be hyperactive during the day. Eureka.

My proposal to you, Michael, is simple. Get yourself down to Llano once a month for the next couple of years and Dr. Jennifer will get your teeth and airways in order. Heck, we even have an extra room you can stay in while you're here. We don't have a pool, but I'm sure we could find some ranch work to keep you in shape. If not, I'll drive you down to the river and you can swim upstream for a while. Once we get things straightened out, you will breathe better, recover better, and sleep better. Can you win nine in 2012? We'd love to help you find out.

Until then, keep smiling.

Drs. Chip and Jennifer Parrish

-Questions or comments can be sent to Drs. Parrish at ParrishDental@aol.com.