

No Teeth Left Behind...

According to a recent study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 19.3% of US adults age 65 and older have lost all of their teeth due to decay or gum disease. This translates to one in five senior citizens, our neighbors and friends, who have to laugh, smile, eat, and speak without their natural teeth. Recently, we saw several movie stars on TV at the *Academy Awards* with dentures and prosthetic teeth. Anyone can lose their teeth.

Advances in tooth and gum care will help to allow future generations to keep their teeth. Tooth loss is not something anyone has to accept, even if “my mom and grandma both wore dentures.” Quality, preventive care will help most people keep most of their teeth their whole lives.

What about those who have already lost their teeth? What can be done to improve those smiles? Can dentures be made so they eat better and look better? Can a full set of teeth be replaced without dentures?

Yes they can.

Technology has improved to the point where dentures can look as good as or better than natural teeth. Computer programs can measure facial proportions to design the perfect set of teeth and the perfect smile to match any face shape. Injection molding and improved materials can make dentures fit better than ever.

Affordable “mini” implant systems have been developed to hold dentures in so that they chew better. No more anxiety about your teeth falling out during dinner. Procedures have been developed so that an old, existing set of teeth can be improved by adding a few implants to anchor them down. Complete dentures are more comfortable, more beautiful, and more functional than ever before.

Implant technology now allows us to make complete sets of teeth that don’t ever have to come out of the mouth. With as few as four implants, we can replace a complete arch (top or bottom set) of teeth that stay in the mouth all day every day. We can replace teeth with teeth, instead of hunks of plastic. This can be done in cases of single or a few missing teeth as well.

All things being equal, it is best to do whatever it takes to keep the teeth that God gave us. Great home care and preventive dentistry can help to maintain those pearly whites. For that one in five who has already lost their teeth, now is a great time to upgrade. Ask your dentist what they can do for you.

Until next time, keep smiling.

-Please send comments to Drs. Parrish at www.ParrishDental.com.