

Never Too Old...

At the tender age of four and thirty, I have only a bit of life experience to share. Sometimes though, life happens to me in ways I must share and I'm much better on paper than in person. My occasional musings on parenthood and philosophy should mostly be taken with the proverbial grain of salt. Personally, I prefer a dash of Tabasco.

In my experience, the healthiest patients we see are the ones who live life to the fullest. I am not so naïve as to think that a positive attitude will mend a tooth cracked straight down the root, but a positive outlook often minimizes complications when said tooth needs to be replaced or repaired. I think that most health care providers would agree that happy and fulfilled patients tend to be healthier. Obviously, bad things can happen to positive people, but that sunny disposition sure helps when life's roller coaster falls.

Dental health care has come a long way. We can reliably replace teeth. We can treat chronic jaw and headache pain. We can stop the onslaught of gum disease and rampant cavities. Dentists can help sleep apnea patients rest better at night and remove wrinkles from the lower half of the face. Smiles can be lengthened, broadened, and whitened to suit almost anyone's esthetic concerns. In short, the days of just pulling teeth and filling cavities are gone.

"I'm too old for any of that fancy stuff," you say. This is a common hurdle most people face. Remember when a phone in your pocket seemed an unnecessary luxury?

Bah humbug. Now is the perfect time to have the healthy mouth you've always wanted. We have patients in their eighties getting braces for crowded front teeth, as well as to treat jaw pain. Seventy something's are getting smile makeovers and dental implants so that they can look, chew, smile, and function better. There is no age limit for a healthy mouth. For many, retirement is a great time to finally receive the dental care that they've always wanted, but never had the time for. There is a proven correlation between the number of teeth in your mouth and your quality of life as you age. The more teeth, the better you can eat, sleep, communicate, and (most importantly) smile each day.

Most likely, many of us are going to be around a lot longer than we think. Modern drugs and ever advancing research into aging (thanks, Boomers) are lengthening life spans every year. People in their sixties may realistically ride this rock around the sun another twenty to thirty times. Remember, whether it's learning to play a new musical instrument, meeting new friends, trying a new food, or fixing a few teeth...you are never too old.

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