



# Changing Peoples' Lives...

BY ASH PARMAR

## FUNCTION

For some people, having a great looking smile is a very high priority. However, for other people improving the function and the ability to chew and eat properly is important. In this article, I will focus on the importance of teeth in function.



## MY GRANDMOTHER

My grandmother is over 90 years old. When I visited her recently, I asked her to remind me how many teeth she had left in her mouth. She replied: "Two". She also does not like dentures. Therefore, my poor grandmother is forced to function with just two teeth. Due to her overall health, she is unsuitable for dental implants at her age. The interesting thing is that my grandmother can eat most things; she has trained to chew as best as she can with the gummy part of her mouth. However, she has to be careful chewing food, and cannot enjoy eating harder foods.

Last year over dinner on one occasion, my mother also reminded me of the importance of keeping your own teeth. She said to me: "Ash, you must tell your patients to look after their teeth. As people get older, one of the main pleasures of life is to enjoy good food. Having healthy, strong teeth is very important..."

## PROBLEMS AFTER LOSING BACK TEETH

Molars, or the back teeth, are very well designed for chewing and eating. They are strong (as

they have multiple roots), and they have a large surface area on the biting surfaces. When someone loses a back tooth, a number of things happen. The opposing tooth can gradually over-erupt as it no longer has a biting antagonist. The tooth behind the gap also begins to tilt forwards. These unfavorable teeth movements can cause bite problems in the future. The other thing is that bone loss occurs after removing a tooth. If a dental implant is placed two months after an extraction, then this will actually preserve the bone and avoid it shrinking away

## LOOSE TEETH

Many of my patients in the past have been treated successfully for loose teeth. If someone has loose teeth, especially at the front, they are limited to how they can bite and therefore they cannot eat confidently. By treating the gums can tighten up the teeth. We then carry out a treatment called splinting, which involves linking teeth with some fibre and white filling material. This really improves the strength of the teeth and tightens them up significantly. This simple, innovative treatment is cost-effective and can prolong the life of teeth by many years.

## DENTURES

Many people wear dentures successfully if they have multiple teeth missing. On the other hand, some people cannot get on with plastic, removable dentures at all. Dentures can be quite stable if there are some teeth to anchor on to. This then makes it more comfortable to eat harder foods. If there are no teeth present, then dental implants can really help secure a denture and improve the function significantly.



Implant supported over denture

## SUMMARY

To enjoy food properly and keep the correct shape of the facial structures, teeth are essential. I advise people to look after their teeth and gums very well, and always try and keep teeth.



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