

DENTAL SELF EXAM

By Dr. Pamela Marzban



Photo By: Dr. Pamela Marzban

This patient pulled his lips back, looked in a mirror and saw his front teeth completely worn down. Now, some of you may be wondering how he let himself get to this point. Well... worn down teeth are not always painful and sometimes life is just so busy we choose not take time to take care of ourselves. It is a lot easier to sport a mustache or to stop wearing lipstick than to deal with this problem.

Being able to chew what you want and smile with confidence affords quality of life through every stage of life. This man was in his late fifties and he wanted his teeth and smile back... and that's exactly what we did for him. Now, his case would have been much easier if we would have started it years before; but, the past is the past and we still had something to work with. He has been effortlessly enjoying and using his smile for the past nine years and will continue to do so throughout the many more years of his life.

With modern dentistry, this is a fixable situation because there is still plenty of bone supporting the teeth. Thirty years ago, the only choice was to have the teeth removed and replaced with a denture. Dentures are not for everyone, some people will not tolerate them in any way.

In fact, it is a huge fallacy that when you get old, you will need dentures.

Infection and pain are not the only reason people lose teeth. Gum disease, decay and grinding of teeth are the three main ways. A self-exam is very easy to do. Go to a mirror, pull the cheeks and lips back and have a close look. If something doesn't look right, it probably needs attention. Make a check list of everything that doesn't look right. The next step is to call a dentist you trust.

There are infinite reasons that people can find not to seek care. Dental fear is still one of the main reasons people avoid going to a qualified dentist. Closely behind is time, money and lack of trust. A consultation visit consists of taking X-rays and some very clear photos so you can see what the dentist sees. It is a safe appointment with no commitment. It makes sense to have a consultation with the purpose of gathering information that uniquely fits your wants and needs.

You owe it to yourself to find out your dental status. Once you know what it is and what your options are, it's up to you to decide and what you decide is completely your decision.



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