

Dentures Earn A Smile Of Approval

How Deborah found happiness with her decision to embrace an implant-secured appliance

BY ROY CUMMINGS

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Come September, snowbird Deborah Desforges will tolerate the 20-hour drive from Massachusetts to Florida, where she and her daughter will make their annual birthday visit to Disney World.

"My daughter and I were both born in September, and ever since my granddaughter was born four years ago, we've been celebrating our birthdays here in Florida at Disney World," Deborah explains. "We love it. And my granddaughter loves it, too."

Spending quality time with her daughter, grandchildren and son is what Deborah, 59, has done most often since she retired from her career in nursing a few years ago.

Unfortunately, a dental issue recently robbed her of precious quality time.

"The problem actually started just before I retired," Deborah explains. "All of a sudden, my top teeth started breaking. They were decaying. So, I went to my dentist, and he said that I needed to have *root canals* done on those five upper teeth.

"After hearing that I decided to get a second opinion, and I'm glad I did because the second dentist told me that root canals weren't going to do me any good because my teeth were going to continue to decay and break.

"I don't know for sure, but the problem seems to be hereditary. My parents and two siblings got dentures when they were in their 20s, so I was the lucky one, I guess, because I at least made it to my 50s before my teeth started falling apart."

Certain that she was on a path toward dentures, Deborah chose to have the five failing teeth removed.

A couple of years later, more teeth began to break. This time, Deborah visited Jayraj Patel, DMD, FAGD, FAAID, DABOI, of DeLand Implant Dentistry.

"My mom went to DeLand Implant Dentistry after she started losing her teeth, and she recommended it to me," Deborah offers. "She said that they do great work there, so I made an appointment to go see them after I returned to Florida a couple of years ago."

Know Your Options

"When Deborah first visited us, she knew she was going to need something along the lines of a removable full upper denture and was sure of what she wanted, but even in cases like that, we always present the patient with all possible options," Dr. Patel explains.

"We believe it is our obligation to explain all options to our patients and let them decide what is best for them. In Deborah's case, she eventually chose to go with an upper denture secured by *dental implants*."

Dental implants are root-shaped, screw-like bodies that are surgically placed into the jawbone, where new bone naturally grows around them to form the foundation for an abutment and replacement teeth.

The replacement teeth can be a crown that is cemented or screwed onto the abutment, a partial bridge that can be affixed to one or more implants, or a full denture that can be fastened to a series of implants.

Prior to placing an implant, some patients require *bone grafting*, a procedure designed to enhance the volume of the jawbone so it can properly support the implant. This is often the case with patients who have been



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The dental-implant process can be quite lengthy, but Deborah says the results are worth the exercise in patience. "Now, I smile all the time," she raves.

missing teeth for an extended period, such as Deborah.

"Without teeth, there is a lack of stimulation for bone regeneration and maintenance in the jaw," Dr. Patel educates. "That's why patients who have been missing teeth for a long time often need bone grafts. The bone grafts help rebuild required bone in the jaw."

Grafts are typically done at the time the implants are seated, but in treating Deborah, Dr. Patel removed Deborah's failing upper teeth, performed the grafting procedures and fit her with a temporary denture before placing the implants.

"We took this approach first and foremost because we wanted Deborah to get a feel for the denture because it's so much different than having natural teeth, and we wanted her to get used to all that goes into cleaning and maintaining a denture," Dr. Patel offers.

"In addition to providing Deborah with that adjustment period, we also wanted to have adequate time for the new bone to grow and heal so that she had a more stable foundation for the implants, which were seated a bit later. This also gave us an opportunity to repair some lower teeth that were damaged."

Best for All Involved

During the adjustment period, Deborah decided once and for all that she wanted a

removable upper denture. A prosthesis of that nature is often secured by four implants, two on each side of the arch, but Dr. Patel fit Deborah with three on each side of her arch.

"We did that for a couple of reasons," Dr. Patel explains. "First, with six implants securing the denture instead of four, there is obviously more retention for the denture.

"Also, by placing more implants, the bone is more stimulated, and that helps slow bone resorption. Finally, by placing six implants we allow for change in the future should Deborah ever decide that she wants a fixed prosthesis. If that happens, she has the right number of implants in the correct position to accommodate that change.

"And again, I could have taken a different approach. I could have taken out quite a bit of bone, placed four implants and given her a final prosthesis four or five months sooner than we did, but the approach we took was the best for everybody involved."

It typically takes between three and six months for new bone to grow strong enough to support an implant, so Dr. Patel's approach forced Deborah to wait a few extra months before receiving her final prosthetic. The result, Deborah says, was worth the wait.

"Everything has worked out great," she raves. "I'm very happy with Dr. Patel's work. You can tell by how much I smile now. I used to be very hesitant to smile but now, I smile all the time, and I'm happy to do so."

Meet the DOCTOR

Jayraj Patel, DMD, FAGD, FAAID, DABOI/ID



earned his dental degree from the University of Florida College of Dentistry. His goal is to deliver comprehensive and compassionate care to patients in a

caring, comfortable and professional environment. He provides personalized and complete care using the latest technologies and treatment modalities with an aim to build long-term relationships with patients based on trust, respect and friendship. Driven by a deep passion to help patients, he is constantly pursuing advanced training through continuing education courses. He has extensive training in implant dentistry through the AAID MaxiCourse from Augusta University Dental College of Georgia and Comprehensive Implant Continuum from Implant Educators. He is certified to perform IV sedation in the dental office. He is a diplomate of the American Board of Oral Implantology/Implant Dentistry, a fellow of the American Academy of Implant Dentistry and Academy of General Dentistry.

DeLand Implant Dentistry

JAYRAJ PATEL, DMD, FAGD, FAAID, DABOI/ID

To Learn MORE

Call Today

Dr. Jayraj Patel is known for his exceptional, caring attitude toward his patients and work. He is committed to delivering the most advanced, personalized dental care while offering patients a uniquely satisfying experience. Along with the staff of DeLand Implant Dentistry, he welcomes new patients and any questions concerning their range of services, which include cleanings, preventive care, sedation and cosmetic, restorative, prosthetic and implant dentistry. For an appointment, call or visit the office.

» **Where:** Spring Oaks Prof. Center
150 McGregor Rd., Deland, FL

» **Phone:** (386) 738-2006

» **Website:** delandimplants.com

Deborah is also happy that Dr. Patel saved several of her lower teeth by repairing and placing crowns on them. In doing so, Dr. Patel ensured that Deborah's bite is as functional and stable as possible.

"Dr. Patel did a great job," she concludes. "And I never felt a thing. No pain at all.

"He's a really good dentist, very compassionate, and everyone in his office is the same way.

"They're a great bunch of people, and just as my mom did with me, I would highly recommend them." ■