

Building Bridges, Enhancing Smiles

Implant-supported dental prosthetic restores proper teeth function and enriches appearance

BY ROY CUMMINGS

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The Philippines might be a nice place to visit, but Darci Weaver didn't want to live there. So, when the medical device company she was working for moved her job there a dozen years ago, Darci retired instead and moved to Florida.

The move was one she had practiced several times before.

"I used to live in Maryland, but I visited Florida a lot, once every couple of weeks, to help look after my father," Darci explains. "I'd go down to Florida, stay for a week or two, and then go back home. I did that for a number of years."

Since becoming a full-time Floridian, Darci, 72, has devoted most of her time to resting, relaxing, and looking after her husband and their 9-year-old Boston terrier.

But two years ago, Darci was forced to look after herself after a bothersome dental issue developed.

"I had a bridge that was almost 45 years old, and it was failing," Darci explains. "The bridge ran from eyetooth to eyetooth and replaced my top four front teeth, which I started to lose after I broke one of them in a bad fall down a flight of stairs when I was 9 years old.

"Over the years, the other three front teeth started to turn black because the roots were all dead, so my dentist fit me with a permanent bridge that attached to the eyeteeth. But one of the teeth the bridge was secured to started to fail, and that's when the problems started."

Without proper support, Darci's bridge began to slip. That made it difficult for her to bite into anything and forced her to cut up most of her food before eating. A visit to her dentist led to a recommendation to visit Jayraj Patel, DMD, FAGD, of DeLand Implant Dentistry.

Fix This

During his initial exam, Dr. Patel discovered that Darci had *Torus palatinus* that threatened to complicate matters. *Torus palatinus* (aka *palatal tori*) refers to bony growths that form on the roof of the mouth. These growths can vary in size and are generally harmless, but they can make it difficult to wear a bridge such as a full or partial denture.

The presence of torus palatinus prohibited Darci from being fit with a partial denture, so Dr. Patel was tasked with replacing her failing fixed bridge. To do that, he recommended fitting her with a new bridge supported 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 fixed bridge that can be affixed to one or more implants, or a full or partial denture that can be fastened to a series of implants.

Prior to placing an implant, some patients require a bone grafting 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 missing teeth for an extended period.

"Without teeth, there is no pressure from chewing to stimulate new bone growth in the



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The dental implant process can be quite involved, but Darci says the outcome is worth the investment in time.

jawbone," Dr. Patel educates. "That's why patients who have been missing teeth for an extended period of time often need bone grafts. The bone grafts help rebuild new bone in the jawbone."

Grafts are either done before the implants are placed or at the time the implants are seated. The implants then need three to six months to heal to a point where they can support a bridge. During the healing period, patients are usually fit with temporary replacement teeth.

Satisfied Customer

Because she had been missing teeth for several years, Darci required bone grafts, of which there are many types. The variety allows Dr. Patel to customize treatment plans based on each patient's needs.

In Darci's case, Dr. Patel chose an artificial material, one that he refers to as a "bone cement" that heals faster and causes less trauma to the mouth because it does not require an extensive surgical procedure for placement of the grafting material.

"Darci is a bit of a fearful patient, so the other thing we did for her was offer her *IV sedation*," Dr. Patel adds. "That is something we are willing to do for all our patients who are a bit anxious, and she accepted our offer."

Intravenous sedation is a monitored form of anesthesia that allows the patient to remain in a state of twilight sleep during intense procedures. Dr. Patel says it is a great tool that benefits the patient and dentist.



COURTESY PHOTO DELAND IMPLANT DENTISTRY
Darci's teeth before and after her dental treatment.

"IV sedation allows us to control the depth of conscious sedation that is desired, and that allows us to get a lot of work accomplished in a short period," the doctor educates. "And in Darci's case, we had a lot of work to do."

"Delighted" With Outcome

That work included pulling the failing eyetooth that was anchoring the old bridge and preparing first and second premolars on the right and left side for their role as anchor teeth for a temporary 10-unit fixed bridge that Darci wore while she waited for new bone to grow.

Once new bone had grown in the areas of the grafting, Dr. Patel seated the four implants that would serve as the anchors for Darci's permanent fixed bridge. He also placed crowns on the surviving eyetooth, first and second premolars.

"The whole process was a lot more involved than I thought it would be, but it was worth it because I am really delighted with the outcome," Darci raves. "I recently took a trip back to Maryland, and everybody there was telling me how beautiful my teeth are now.

Meet the DOCTOR

Jayraj Patel, DMD, FAGD



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

comfortable, professional environment. He provides advance, personalized and complete care using the latest technologies and treatment modalities with an aim to build a long-term relationship 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 Academy of General Dentistry and International Congress of Oral Implantologists, and an associate fellow of the American Academy of Implant Dentistry.



To Learn MORE

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Dr. Jayraj Patel is known for his exceptional, caring attitude toward their 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, they welcome 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

"Dr. Patel did a great job matching the color of my new teeth with my old teeth, and one of the best things is that I can eat anything I want now without worrying about that partial slipping or breaking off or anything like that.

"I can't say enough good things about Dr. Patel and his work. He did a great job of explaining everything to me before he did it, and I would absolutely recommend him. He's very thorough and very kind, and I'm really glad I went to see him." ■