

Patient's Prerogative

Implants aren't always necessary; when they're not, you choose the treatment option that's best for you

BY ROY CUMMINGS

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In keeping with the theme of the race, Chevrolet made only 500 replicas of the classic Corvette that led the pack as the pace car for the start of the 2008 Indianapolis 500. For a few years beginning in 2017, Ron Stephens was the proud owner of one of them.

"I had No. 248 of 500, and what a car it was," Ron says. "It was pretty much track-ready with the more powerful motor and the adjustable suspension. Just an awesome car. And when I bought it, it only had 1,900 miles on it."

Ron put another 7,000 miles on that car, which was one of 10 Corvettes that he's owned. But he sold it along with a couple of Harley Davidson motorcycles to help pay for the home that he and his wife moved to here in Florida a few years ago.

"We didn't know the house we sold in Colorado was going to sell for as much as it did," Ron says. "So here we are in Florida, living 25 minutes from Bike Week with no motorcycle and in the perfect place to drive a Corvette, and I haven't got that either."

Ron, 67, is hoping to rectify that situation through the purchase of another motorcycle or Corvette. He's free to do that now after recently rectifying a far more pressing problem with the state of his teeth.

Ron says those problems stemmed largely from "neglect" that resulted in bleeding gums and the extraction of several upper and lower front teeth, all of which were pulled by a dentist in Colorado who fit him with partials to replace the extracted teeth.

The partials didn't work very well for him, though. They didn't provide the function he needed to bite into a sandwich properly, and they proved a bit flimsy, the metal attachments often bending in a way that disrupted the fit or breaking altogether.

"And then, of course, you have to take them out and clean them all the time," Ron says. "And if you go somewhere and you somehow forget to put them in, you're running around with no teeth, and you have to make sure you don't smile as much."

"So, this was all happening as my wife and I were getting ready to move to Florida, and I figured that as soon as I got here, I'd start looking for a dentist who could give me get into something more permanent. And, in looking online for that dentist, I found Dr. Patel."

First Things First

Dr. Patel is Jayraj Patel, DMD, FAGD, FAAID, DABOI, of DeLand Implant Dentistry. He first met Ron two years ago, and during his initial evaluation, Dr. Patel discovered that Ron was still suffering from the periodontal disease that had already cost him several teeth.

"Periodontal disease is just like diabetes Type 1; once you have it, you have it for life," Dr. Patel explains. "It's something that you're not going to get rid of, something you just have to maintain as best you can and try to keep from getting worse."

"So, our first order of business with a patient such as Ron is to return the patient



JORDAN PYSZ / iFoundMyDoctor.com

Periodontal disease ruined Ron's smile. He found a fix for it at DeLand Implant Dentistry, where he was fit with a fixed lower bridge and an upper bridge supported by dental implants.

to a healthy oral state. In this case, we performed a deep cleaning below the gum line to control the active infection.

"We then put together a more detailed treatment plan that called for regular periodontal maintenance treatments for the gum disease, a fixed bridge to replace his missing bottom teeth and a bridge supported by dental implants to replace the missing top teeth."

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 missing teeth for an extended period.

"Without teeth, there is no pressure from chewing to stimulate new bone growth in the jawbone," Dr. Patel educates. "That's why patients who have been missing teeth for a long time often need bone grafts. The bone grafts help to rebuild new bone in the jawbone."

Grafts are typically done at the time the implants are seated, and in treating Ron, Dr. Patel considered doing a graft and seating implants in the bottom arch, but he and Ron agreed that replacing the missing bottom teeth with a fixed bridge was the best option.

"The fixed bridge allowed us to solve the problem with the bottom teeth more quickly, it was more economical, and there was a good prognosis for success," says Dr. Patel, who notes that at DeLand Implant Dentistry, implants are only seated when necessary.

"We're not one of those practices that rip teeth out and put implants in," he confirms. "We do implants when they're necessary. If a patient can get an equally good result with something else, we offer that and let the patient decide."

"A Great Job"

Per Ron's decision, Dr. Patel fabricated a six-tooth bridge that attaches to Ron's lower right and left canine teeth and replaces the lower four front missing teeth. While creating that bridge, Dr. Patel began the process of seating two implants in the top arch, where Ron was missing the two central incisors and the right lateral incisor.

After seating the implants, Dr. Patel waited four months for the implants to heal before constructing the three-tooth bridge that would be affixed to the implants. During that waiting period, Ron wore a temporary bridge. Ron's oral health is now "in a good state," the doctor says.

"Everything looks good and works right," Ron enthuses. "And now I don't have to worry about what I'm eating anymore or remember to put my teeth in before I go out in public somewhere."

"Dr. Patel did a great job, and my wife tells me, Now you've got a Corvette in your mouth, and I guess she's right. It's a pretty nice one, too, so I'm very pleased with the work that Dr. Patel did for me."

Dr. Patel's treatment of Ron included fitting him with a customized tray from PeriProtect that allows him to control his gum disease. The system works by lining a tray that is worn once a day for 15 minutes with a medication that is designed to fight gum infection.

"Dr. Patel really knows what he's doing, and he shows you all the options, which I really appreciate," Ron concludes. "And

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— Ron

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.



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 the range of services, which include cleanings, preventive care, sedation, and cosmetic, restorative, prosthetic and implant dentistry. For an appointment, call or visit the office.

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I want to say that, with other dentists, it always hurt a little bit, no matter what they were doing. But with Dr. Patel, I never felt anything.

"Going into this whole thing, I was a bit concerned and wondering, What's he going to do? Is he going to take more teeth out? Is he going to drill?"

"But Dr. Patel only did what was necessary, and I didn't feel a thing, and that's why I would absolutely recommend him and DeLand Implant Dentistry." ■