

‘A Reason To Smile’

How a systematic approach to the dental implant procedure improved a veteran’s oral health

BY ROY CUMMINGS
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The army of demons that Peter Tanner encountered during the 13 years he spent serving his country as a member of the United States Marine Corps still harass the 69-year-old retiree. To slay them, Peter wields a pen.

“I’m a writer of military historical fiction,” Peter says. “I’ve written 16 books, all of them self-published as E-books that are real cheap because I do it as therapy to help me deal with all that I went through when I was in the military.”

Peter’s military stint included a long stretch in which he worked in counterterrorism across Asia and Europe. The protagonist in his books is based in part on Peter’s experiences, but those experiences aren’t the only ones he’s had to fret over during his life.

For years, Peter also struggled with severe oral health issues. Like the demons that he’s still fighting, those issues date back to his days in the military, when a dentist there inadvertently cracked two molars while repairing another tooth.

“They were hairline fractures at the time, but they got progressively worse,” Peter details. “Eventually, those teeth just fell apart and fell out of my mouth. That was about five years ago, but I didn’t have the wherewithal at the time to do anything about it.”

A couple years later, Peter lost another tooth while eating breakfast one morning. That sparked a search for a dentist who could resolve this problem once and for all. The dentist Peter chose is Jayraj Patel, DMD, FAGD, FAAID, DABOI/ID, of DeLand Implant Dentistry.

The Proper Protocol

Dr. Patel first met Peter in 2022. During their initial meeting, Peter asked the doctor to remove all his remaining teeth and fit him with *dental implants*, screw-like bodies that are seated in the jawbone, where they become the foundation for replacement teeth.

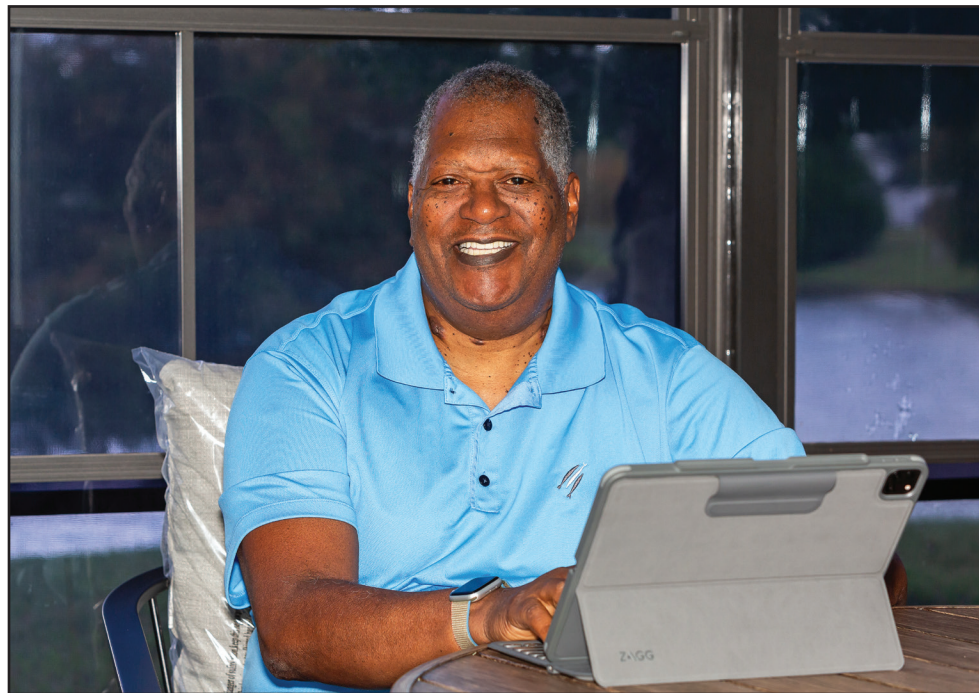
The replacement teeth can be a crown that is cemented or screwed onto an abutment, a partial bridge that can be affixed to one or more implants, or a full prosthesis that can be fastened to a series of implants.

Peter was seeking the latter.

“And he had a valid reason for that,” states Dr. Patel. “He had some broken teeth and *periodontal disease* that had resulted in the loss of some bone around all of his existing teeth. But at my practice, we don’t just start pulling healthy teeth.

“There are a lot of practices that do that so they can place more implants, but that’s not what we do. Before we start pulling teeth, we take a comprehensive look at the patient’s oral health because there’s not a single model that resolves every patient’s issues.”

After explaining that to Peter, Dr. Patel explained the options, which included traditional removable dentures, implant



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Peter’s full-mouth reconstruction took several months to complete, but he is “overjoyed” with the outcome.

stabilized removable dentures and implant supported fixed prostheses. Peter stuck to his wish for an implant-supported fixed option.

To honor that request, Dr. Patel began his care by treating the periodontal disease to ensure healthy gums that would be critical in creating a healthy foundation for the dental reconstruction that would follow.

That reconstruction project began in August 2022 with the removal of Peter’s upper teeth.

At the same time, Dr. Patel performed a *bone grafting* procedure to enhance the volume of the jawbone so that it could properly support the implants.

Grafts are often done at the same time the implants are seated, but to ensure a strong foundation, Dr. Patel waited until the grafts had taken effect and new bone had grown in the upper arch before seating Peter’s implants as Peter had chronic infection in the bone due to several fractured teeth.

During that time, Peter wore a temporary upper prosthesis. During that time, Dr. Patel also began his work on Peter’s lower arch.

That arch was treated the same as the upper arch, with Dr. Patel performing bone grafts and waiting before seating the implants.

“The reason we waited before placing the implants is because it’s important to have a proper foundation for implants and monitor the patient after every surgical phase, whether it’s bone grafting or implant placement, and to ensure everything is healing as it should along the way,” Dr. Patel says. “This way, if something goes wrong, we can catch it early and take corrective measures before it leads to major devastation.

“There are times when we do the grafting, place the implants and give patients a temporary implant prosthesis on the same day. But in Peter’s case, that would burdened his body as he had chronic infections and increased the chances of failure.”

A “Happy” Ending

By the spring of 2023, Peter had been fit with implants in both arches. He received eight implants in the upper arch and seven in the lower arch.

Those implants initially served as the support for temporary fixed prostheses that Peter wore for about six months.

“We typically fit patients with temporary prostheses because we want to get the bite right,” Dr. Patel says. “We also want to ensure the teeth are functioning properly and that the patient is happy with the aesthetics.

“If any changes needed to be made, they are made during that phase, and then we apply those changes to the final prosthesis, which Peter was fit with this past summer. And now, his smile is completely restored, and he is very happy with the outcome.”

Indeed, he is. Peter says that prior to visiting Dr. Patel, he had spent several years eating only soft foods because he couldn’t chew properly. It had also been years since he last bit into an apple. Now, he can eat anything he wishes and smile with confidence again.

“Thanks to Dr. Patel, I have a reason to smile,” Peter enthuses. “He is a wonderful man, and he did great work. He told me exactly what to expect every step of the way and everything came out the way he said it would from the beginning.

“Dr. Patel did for me what other dentists could not do, and it was never painful, so I am overjoyed with the result. I’ve got a full set of teeth now and they work and look great, and because of that, I would absolutely recommend him to anyone and everyone.

“And I want to add that Dr. Patel’s staff is the greatest I’ve ever encountered. When you come in for an appointment, you don’t sit there waiting for an hour. Within a minute or two, you’re in the chair, and everyone is very professional. Dr. Patel and his staff, they’re all just great.” ■

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.



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 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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