

Ask The Dentist-July 2013

Dear Dr. Winter, Mother is 96 years old and she started wearing dentures at about 60. She has no lower bone left! She has tried denture paste but it is useless. She eats the paste, gets sick to her stomach and when she leaves it out her lower denture bounces like a basketball when trying to eat. She can only drink her food now and is not a candidate for any surgery. Any suggestions?

Dear L. I am sorry for your mother's problems. I would need to see her existing denture to evaluate the bite, the extensions of the denture acrylic and make sure it is fabricated properly to optimize her situation. When people have no bone left a soft silicone liner may help to increase the hold of the lower denture and provide more comfort. We do this by first testing it in tissue conditioner (like a soft band-aid) to see if her biting and chewing can be improved prior to making her a new set of dentures. That way she can see if we can help her before undergoing the expense of a new set of dentures. Lastly, I have successfully used mini-implants to stabilize dentures in patients with very little bone as we can place these in as little as 10 mm of bone. These would greatly help keep the dentures in place and prevent movement that interferes with her chewing! You can see videos of this on our website.

Dear Dr. Winter, I am a male that has suffered from bulimia for many years since high school wrestling made me constantly drop weight for my matches. I am afraid I have permanently damaged my teeth and my front teeth are chipping and thin. What do you suggest I do to prevent further tooth destruction and reverse the damage I have done? I am free from purging for over two years and now it's time to fix myself.

Dear Steve, I applaud you for your courageous battle with a most troubling and debilitating illness. I also appreciate bringing this illness to the attention of fellow men, as this disease doesn't just affect women. Bulimia or binging and purging are a subset of Anorexia and the acid reflux effects of purging can cause damage to enamel of teeth. I would need to see how much enamel is gone to discuss treatment options. I will evaluate your remaining enamel, your level of sensitivity and your bite to determine if you require crowns, orthodontics or perhaps only some conservative fillings. It is important to realize that one major problem of acid erosion is that as the teeth wear and get thin, the opposing teeth super-erupt and move up onto the worn area. So treating bulimia is not just about the thinning worn teeth but the new position of the opposing teeth. You can see examples of bulimia treatment on www.winterdental.com

We welcome our readers to call us at 414-464-9021 for a comprehensive new patient appointment or a consultation visit.

Yours for great dental health,

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