

# Missing Teeth and Tooth-wear

DR JEAN PAUL DEMAJO ON DENTAL SOLUTIONS TO KEEP YOUR TEETH IN TOP CONDITION



Intra Oral View Before Treatment



Extra Oral View Before Treatment



Intra Oral View After Treatment



Extra Oral View After Treatment

Just like our skin, our teeth are subjected to daily heavy wear and tear. The only difference is that our skin is replaced daily while our teeth have to last a lifetime. Furthermore when we lose teeth due to illness or neglect the remaining teeth are subjected to an even larger load than normal. This results in:

- Tooth cracks and chippings: the teeth thin out and as a result develop micro-cracks which result in chippings.
- Increased tooth mobility: higher individual loads result in the widening of the periodontal ligament, which keeps your teeth in their bone sockets. The ligament acts like a suspension but, when used too much, causes the teeth to start moving.
- Thinning of the jaw and gum: facial tissue like lips and cheeks, normally supported by teeth, collapses inwards.
- Eruption and tilting of teeth.
- Facial collapse: the vertical height between the bottom of your nose and the underside of your chin is reduced by a few millimetres due to loss of tooth height. This causes creases at the corners of the mouth which may crack.
- Darkening of the teeth: this occurs due to teeth depositing internal reparative tooth tissue.
- Possible sensitivity: not too common, but not very easy to treat when it occurs.
- Teeth dying off: this occurs due to high loads. We should bite our food on the front teeth and chew on the back teeth, but if the back ones are missing then the biting and chewing occurs on the front ones.
- Jaw joint or muscle pain due to over-closing.

## A CASE STUDY

A man who is soon turning 50 wishes to revamp his teeth. He has lost six posterior teeth and has worn his remaining teeth.

His wishes were to:

1. Replace his missing teeth with fixed teeth; no removable dentures.
2. Fix his remaining teeth and protect them from further tooth-wear.
3. Select a new colour for his teeth.

## Treatment plan

- Consultation and discussion.
- Study models and photography.
- Stabilisation of the current dentition and gums.
- The missing teeth had been missing for many years and as a result the resultant bone bed was lacking volume. This required a large bone graft called a sinus lift with simultaneous implant insertion.
- The standing dentition was restored with ceramic inlay, onlays, veneers and crowns.
- Four months after implantation, implant crowns and bridges were fitted on the implants.
- Maintenance program with recall on a four-month basis.

Tooth wear and missing teeth are very often seen together. Its importance is right up there in the chart with dental caries and gum disease. In skilled hands and with the right plan this can be taken care of quite easily.

Ask your dentist! **C**

**Dr Jean Paul Demajo, Dental and Implant Surgeon, trained in London working in private practice in Malta.**

