

## **The myth of tooth loss. Yes, you can keep your teeth for a Lifetime.**

It is a sad day in our practice when we encounter a patient who has lost – or is losing -- a tooth. Aside from the cosmetic issues, tooth loss and potentially severe health issues are irrefutably linked.

But more than this, in this age of advanced dental science and technology, tooth loss is unnecessary. Yet many believe that as we age tooth loss is somehow inevitable. This may have been the case in generations past, but no longer. Today there is no reason we cannot keep our teeth for our lifetimes.

I say this because it is not the process of aging that causes tooth loss. Rather it is the result of an oral disease called periodontal disease. A disease that is *preventable*.

As we all know, the elderly are the fastest growing segment of the U.S. population. They are healthier and have retained more of their natural teeth than prior generations. But, tooth loss continues, unnecessarily so. The question is: why? The simple answer is many seniors simply do not visit a dentist, even once a year. Professional care is the single most important preventive strategy in ensuring that teeth last a lifetime. Some suggest seniors stop caring because they are not out in public as much and therefore think oral hygiene doesn't matter.

What's the solution? First, I think family members should encourage seniors who are disabled or have trouble getting around to seek dental care. Seniors entering a nursing home should inquire about on-site dental care.

On top of this, older people can suffer from dry mouth, which slows down the flow of saliva. Saliva is a key to preventing tooth decay by rinsing away food particles and neutralizing harmful acids. Dry mouth often comes with old age, but can also be caused by medications like antihistamines, decongestants, antidepressants and diuretics. Dry mouth can often be treated by a dentist.

In addition, seniors should floss daily and brush twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste. They should also ask their dentist about fluoride rinses and gels, which can help prevent cavities. Seniors are most likely to get cavities where old fillings have chipped or where root surfaces are left unprotected by receding gums. Also, seniors should snack in moderation and avoid snacks with sugars and starches. And finally, they need to notify their dentist of any change in medication.

Following these simple preventive measures can make all the difference. But let me add, even seniors with no teeth still need to visit the dentist regularly. Many aspects of optimum oral health, such as adjusting ill-fitting dentures and oral cancer screenings, can be handled at routine dental visits. For more information, please visit our web site at [info@jkdds](mailto:info@jkdds). For those all important check up appointments, call our office today at 212-838-8230.

In health,

Jason Kasarsky, DDS  
and staff

### **SPECIAL NOTE:**

I am pleased to announce that I have accepted a faculty position at the prestigious Spear Institute at the Scottsdale Center for Dentistry. This will not impact my service to you and all my valued patients. I mention it because it further validates the trust you have placed in me to provide you with the finest care modern dentistry can provide. For more information visit [www.spearinstitute.com](http://www.spearinstitute.com)