

Tackle Age-Related Challenges For Confident Smiles

Not counting wisdom teeth, the adult mouth is designed to hold 28 natural teeth. Yet, for American adults over the age of 65, the average number of teeth is less than 19.

Over 27 percent in this age bracket are missing all of their natural teeth.

Particular oral health challenges for mature adults include:

HIGHER RISKS OF TOOTH LOSS: Tooth loss, at any age, poses particular challenges to both physical and psychological health. In addition to a compromised ability to eat a healthy diet, the ability to chew comfortably is an issue for many who are missing teeth or wear a denture.

Food not properly chewed can lead to digestive problems. To no surprise, denture wearers take more medications and have more gastrointestinal problems than adults with their natural teeth.

HIGHER RISKS OF GUM DISEASE: The leading cause of adult tooth loss in the U.S. is **periodontal (gum) disease**. The aging process poses additional challenges to oral health, which can seriously impact overall health as well.

Gum disease bacteria have been linked to heart disease, stroke, some cancers, high blood pressure, arthritis, diabetes, preterm babies, impotency and erectile dysfunction (ED). Suspected links to Alzheimer's disease are being studied.

Gum disease develops when the mouth can no longer combat high oral bacteria levels. Initially, accumulated bacteria form a sticky film that coats teeth and gums, known as plaque. When plaque is not removed, it can harden on tooth surfaces, known as tartar (or calculus).

Tartar cannot be brushed or flossed away. It can only be removed by dental professionals using special tools. If not removed, tartar continues to build, attacking tooth enamel and gum tissues.

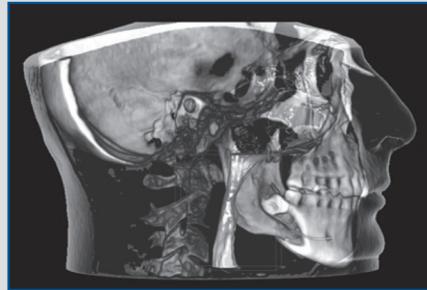
HIGHER FREQUENCY OF DRY MOUTH: Older adults have additional oral health challenges due to "dry mouth," which is a part of the aging process. Saliva helps to rinse bacteria and food particles from the mouth. As the flow declines with age, a drier mouth offers an ideal environment for bacteria reproduction.

Oral dryness is a side effect of many prescription medications. The American Association of Consultant Pharmacists reports that adults ages 65-69 take an average of 15 prescriptions with ages 80-84 averaging 18.

GREATER CHALLENGES FOR FEMALES: Post-menopausal women have higher risks of gum disease due to declining hormone levels. This makes them more prone to inflammation from oral bacteria's attack on gum tissues.

GREATER CHALLENGES WITH AT-HOME CARE: Conditions such as stiff joints and arthritis compromise **manual dexterity**. This often makes it difficult to brush and floss thoroughly.

Cone Beam 3D Images Offer Many Advantages To Our Patients



We are pleased to announce our latest technology — Cone Beam 3D imaging. This advanced system captures clear, concise and amazing views — at the lowest radiation levels possible.

Cone Beam 3D imaging offers a tremendous advantage for a number of needs. In a single scan, this technology is able to produce three-dimensional (3D) images of teeth, soft tissues, nerve pathways and bone structures.

"Cone-beam" describes the way these particular x-ray beams are emitted, shaped like a cone rather than a fan. The beam scans the head in one pass around the patient, capturing up to 600 images.

These images are most often generated for:

- ideal assessment of the jaws (for implant placement)
- evaluation of the temporomandibular joints (TMJ)
- review of airway passages
- views of bone structure damage or bone loss
- examination of teeth and facial structures for orthodontic treatment planning
- lower wisdom teeth in proximity to the mandibular (lower jaw) nerve canal
- evaluation of teeth and bone for signs of infections, cysts, or tumors

Through these images, we may be able to minimize treatment and even eliminate the need for additional x-rays. Our Planmeca unit is also appropriate for children and is wheelchair accessible.

The Cone Beam 3D technology joins our family of advanced technology and features - all available to make treatment more exact, enhance treatment outcomes, optimize comfort, and reduce procedural requirements and treatment time.

When accumulated bacteria are allowed to remain on teeth, the potential for tartar to form increases. This, as you've read, is the path to gum disease.

GREATER CHALLENGES FINANCIALLY: For some, losing dental insurance after retirement adds a new expense to already-reduced budgets. Too, other age-related health conditions can be draining to funds. When people cut back on dental care, gum disease, which begins silently, can develop and run rampant.

What to do? Preventing tooth loss and avoiding periodontal disease are important to maintaining a healthy body. If you have noticed more oral health challenges as you've aged, let's discuss proactive ways to overcome these during a no-charge, private session.

During this time, we can also discuss comfort options and affordable payment plans.

Call 586-739-2155.



Do you snore?

A patient recently shared that she returned home early from a weekend getaway with girlfriends because her roomie snored. Anne stated, "Her snoring was so bad I got little sleep, in spite of wearing ear plugs!"

More than just bothersome, snoring can compromise quality of sleep and contribute to daytime fatigue. As concerning as snoring is, it can lead to more severe health problems.

During snoring, the walls of the throat can collapse, completely blocking air flow. Known as "apnea," about half of those who snore also have sleep apnea for this reason.

Sleep apnea occurs when breathing pauses. For some people, this can last for up to a minute and repeat hundreds of times each night. This deprives the body, especially the heart and brain, with sufficient oxygen.

In addition to daytime fatigue and lack of alertness, sleep apnea has been associated with a number of serious conditions. These include heart disease, stroke, obesity, depression, headaches and diabetes.

If you snore, you are urged to have a sleep study. This will determine if you do suffer with sleep apnea and, if so, to

“ Not all oral appliances are alike. The process of proper fitting and usage requires more than a brief course in a particular appliance type. It requires advanced training in airway flow and skills in conforming each appliance to accommodate specific needs. ”

what degree. If the thoughts of a sleep center study are deterring you, however, an at-home sleep study may be an option.

For people who snore or have mild to moderate sleep apnea, we create custom-designed oral devices that are small and worn comfortably during sleep. The device adjusts the jaw position slightly to open airway passages for sufficient oxygen flow.

Snoring is no laughing matter when it comes to your health. If you snore, take measures to halt it – without surgery or CPAP devices – with our oral appliance therapy.

If you suspect sleep apnea, please act soon. Although snoring may seem like "no big deal," sleep apnea is too serious of a health threat to ignore. Please mention this at your next visit or call **586-739-2155**.

Community Support

- **April 13 - Easter Egg Scramble 1 OR 2 P.M. • River Bends Park** (through Shelby Township Parks & Recreation)
- **2019 Scholarship**
Accepting applications for the **2019 Ban R. Barbat, DDS Scholarship**. This annual award provides financial support to a high school senior pursuing higher education in a health-related field.
- **"A" Grades To Win BIG!**
Students K-12 have a chance to win a **\$500 Visa Gift Card!** After Spring Semester report cards are issued, we will be accepting entries for all "A" grades! Look for an announcement in May but hit the books NOW!

Your Recommendations Are Appreciated!

We love meeting new smiles and take special pleasure in welcoming patients referred to us by current patients.

Please share the importance of healthy smiles with friends and family. And, please extend an invitation to join our patient family!

6044 24-Mile Road
Shelby Township, MI 48316



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