

Main Head: Perio & Implant Centre of the Monterey Bay

Sub Head: Providing a pairing of progressive technology and compassionate care

Periodontist Dr. Jochen Pechak, DDS, MSD, recently worked with a patient, referred to him by a dentist in the Bay Area, whose cousin, a dentist out of the country, had agreed to straighten her teeth with Invisalign. The clear aligners that fit snugly over the teeth might have been a good option for her. Except her cousin didn't check the health of her gums before fitting her teeth. The patient, 36, actually had severe gum disease, which was exacerbated by the aligners, leaving her gums inflamed, and all of her teeth loose. Her dentist said her teeth were hopeless, and all needed to come out.

That's when she went to Dr. Pechak's Perio & Implant Center of the Monterey Bay, for a second opinion.

"Of the patient's 32 teeth, we were able to save all but four," says Dr. Pechak. "Rather than using surgery, we addressed her gums with a laser treatment and, after two appointments, her inflammation was gone."

Periodontal disease, an inflammatory disease caused by bacteria, affects the soft tissues and hard structures that support the teeth. It actually is a lot more common than people presume, says Pechak, because it doesn't present with the same symptoms and discomfort as tooth decay. Yet as much as 80% of the country reportedly is experiencing some degree of the disease.

Now, more than ever before, patients can keep their teeth for life, provided gum disease is detected early and treated appropriately. That's the key, says Dr. Pechak.

"Some people are more prone to getting periodontal disease than others. So, it's very important," he says, "when having a dental check up, to look at the gums to make sure there's no inflammation or bleeding. Bad breath also can be a sign. As the disease advances without treatment, teeth start loosening or shifting. At that stage, it can be too late to treat it. So, we scurry to see if we can save the teeth, but it's much harder to do at that state."

Typically, when a patient goes in for routine teeth cleaning, the dental hygienist is the first line of defense, checking to make sure gums are healthy. If a small problem is identified, the dentist can handle it. If the problem is more serious, patients are referred to the Perio & Implant Centre's Sunnyvale or Monterey offices.

“We are in the business of saving teeth, whenever possible,” says Pechak. “If not salvageable, we do a tooth removal, we graft bone if necessary, and place dental implants. Although the implants, with a titanium artificial root, are an excellent solution for missing teeth, the best option is always saving the natural tooth for the patient, provided the tooth is still stable, and we are able to minimize inflammation.”

The replacement of the natural tooth with a dental implant requires careful planning, and the use of today’s technology for success “ says Pechak. Using a 3DTomographic scanner or Dental Cat Scan, he scans the patient’s teeth and jaw to get a sense of how much bone he has to work with. Next, he creates a computer simulation of the new tooth, in place, using virtual reality to place the tooth prior to the actual surgery. This extra step, allows him to determine the appropriate size and diameter, as well as placement and exact angle of the tooth, to make sure it fits the patient’s mouth perfectly. This is important for stability as well as aesthetics, as well as maintaining open communication with the restorative dentist. Both dentists discuss and plan for the replacement crown, which is the finishing touch and proven results show that working as a team provides for excellent results to the patient. We offer complimentary final well check, after any crown is placed free of charge, as well as an annual well check of any implant we have placed.

“This process of using 3-D Cad Cam planning creates a surgical guide, custom and specific to each patient,” says Pechak, “eliminating guesswork, and yielding a super precise implant. The results and success rate are excellent, and a happy patient makes our entire team glow.” We are passionate about our ‘ 5 Star Care’ and we never cut corners nor take the easy route.

It is important to recognize, says Pechak, that periodontal disease is often linked to other medical conditions. Patients who have generalized gum disease, he says, are more likely to be at increased risk for heart disease and stroke, and diabetics are at risk because severely inflamed gums can affect how well blood sugar is controlled in the body.

“Therefore, it is essential that we take care of our teeth and gums,” he says, “because of the effects this can have on the rest of our health, a healthy mouth is the doorway to a healthy life.”

Moreover, patients who experience gum recession might have exposed tooth roots. Because the root is a lot softer than the enamel of the tooth, it is more prone to cavities. Pechak offers several minimally invasive plastic surgery of the gums and procedures to restore the gum tissue, thereby covering up the root and protecting the health of the tooth. “Among the most satisfying passions of my profession is that more often than not, it can all be restored, managed and healed to a level of little to no existence with the right treatment plan” says Pechak.

The Perio & Implant Center of Monterey offers a pairing of progressive technology, minimally invasive options to common issues, and expertise, with compassionate care. Understanding that many people have avoided going to the dentist due to anxiety or fear, and time away from life while healing, Dr. Pechak provides the latest in minimally invasive options with various levels of sedation, including a general anesthesia for those who feel the need to be completely out during

treatment. Our restorative dentists are welcome to work with us in one appointment, which allows the patient a ‘one stop’ get everything done option.

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