

PATIENT EDUCATION MAGAZINE
WRITTEN BY DENTAL PROFESSIONALS

Dear DOCTOR[®]

DENTISTRY & ORAL HEALTH



How a Smile Makeover Can Change a Life

Read Heather's Amazing Story!

SPECIAL ARTICLE
REPRINT

How Dental Implants and Restorative Dentistry Gave Heather Back Her Smile

Heather Manning has been reborn. Once a self-described recluse who hid her badly decayed teeth from the world, Heather now embraces every day with enthusiasm.

“My self-confidence is through the roof!” she proclaimed joyfully in a recent interview with *Dear Doctor – Dentistry & Oral Health* magazine, which sponsored the contest through which Heather received a free smile makeover. “There’s no amount of words to describe how grateful I am to everybody.”

By “everybody,” Heather means *Dear Doctor* magazine, her own talented dentists, and corporate sponsors including BioHorizons, which donated dental implants to rebuild her smile. “It’s gone literally from a living hell to unbelievable,” Heather remarked.

Before she began getting the care she so desperately needed, Heather could not face the outside world. “I really had no life,” she said. “I was a major recluse.”

Heather’s dental problems began as a child who was never taken to the dentist for routine professional teeth cleanings. “It was really a lack of dental care,” Heather said. “We were not very well off.”

Rampant tooth decay — an infectious disease caused by bacteria — took hold, and Heather began losing her permanent teeth. “I was spitting out pieces of my teeth,” she recalled. By the time she reached age 35, she had just 16 teeth — not all of them whole. “It hurt to smile, it hurt to talk,” she said.

The longer she went without dental care, the more serious things got. At the same time, her appearance made it impossible to find work. “All I got was looks

of disgust,” she said. “I lost my car, my house, I had to go back to living with family. I lost everything.”

Though her despair made it difficult to take action, Heather decided she must rebuild her life — starting with her smile. She found *Dear Doctor’s* Ultimate Smile Makeover contest online and entered it. When she learned she won, she fell to the floor crying.

“I just kept thinking to myself, thank God my nightmare is over,” Heather said. “I just couldn’t believe it.”

Heather was sent to a local cosmetic dentist who gave her a comprehensive oral exam with radiographs (x-ray pictures). He found 16 badly decayed teeth, only 10 of which could be saved. The dentist wanted to design a permanent solution to her problems. He felt that since Heather was still young, removable dentures were a poor solution that would cause her greater problems in the future. The cosmetic dentist suggested Heather also see a periodontist — a dentist who specializes in the gums, bone and connective tissue attachments that support the teeth. The two dentists conferred, and came up with a treatment plan for Heather. Ultimately, her smile would be restored with a combination of dental implants, bridgework and ceramic crowns.



Tooth decay can cause tremendous damage and still allow people to function without pain. That’s why pain can’t be relied upon as the only signal that something is wrong.

Heather's treatment started with non-surgical periodontal therapy — scaling and deep cleaning to improve the health of her gums. Her periodontist also prescribed a fluoride-containing toothpaste for her to use twice each day to help make her teeth more decay-resistant. Having received little dental care in the past, her gum-tissue response to periodontal therapy was dramatic. All of her periodontal disease was eliminated and a major transformation of her gum tissue was obtained.

Heather's periodontist removed six unsalvageable teeth and placed bone-grafting material in the tooth sockets to preserve her bone. The grafting material is used by the body as a scaffold to rebuild bone. This bone-preservation technique is now a routine part of tooth extractions, preventing the bone loss that often results from extraction to help ensure the success of future tooth replacement.

"They kept me nicely numb and made me feel very comfortable," Heather said.

Another periodontal procedure Heather needed on seven upper teeth was crown lengthening surgery. It involves uncovering tooth structure that may be hidden beneath gum tissue and bone. Sometimes it is also done to make the teeth appear longer. But in Heather's case it was necessary because she did not have enough healthy tooth structure above her gum line on which to attach the new crowns. Removing some gum tissue and bone to expose more of the teeth would allow the crowns to be cemented more securely.



HEATHER
BEFORE
TREATMENT

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Heather

As Heather completed her periodontal therapy, her cosmetic dentist fitted her with orthodontic clear aligners to move the teeth she had left into better alignment. This would make it easier to complete the restorations.

Once her orthodontic treatment was completed, the cosmetic dentist performed five root canal procedures. Root canal treatment is necessary when infection from decay spreads into a tooth's living pulp tissue. Two other teeth needed more extensive root canal treatment, which was performed by an endodontist (root canal specialist).

By this time, Heather had been in treatment for almost 6 months and had seen her makeover dentists more than 10 times. "Everybody was really patient with me, really

understanding, very caring, and made me feel really comfortable," Heather said. "That helped a lot."

With a healthier mouth and all remaining teeth in the right position, it was time to start replacing missing teeth. Heather's periodontist placed three BioHorizons dental implants in Heather's lower jaw. These implants, which are actually small titanium posts that serve as replacement tooth roots, would later be topped by beautiful porcelain dental crowns to form lifelong replacement teeth. Heather's cosmetic dentist prepared Heather's upper teeth to receive crowns and bridgework. In this type of tooth-replacement system, missing teeth are replaced with dental crowns that are splinted — attached to each other, and to several natural teeth on either end.



Extensive tooth decay compromised Heather's remaining upper teeth, besides being the reason for her tooth loss.



Through periodontal therapy, endodontics, and restorative dentistry, the remaining upper teeth are replaced and restored to proper function and aesthetics.



The lower teeth were also severely compromised by tooth decay.



With the addition of dental implants to replace some teeth, the lower jaw is restored with porcelain crowns and veneers.

FACTS ABOUT DENTAL IMPLANTS

The most significant dental innovation of our generation



Lifelike Appearance

Dental implants are virtually indistinguishable from your natural teeth, in both aesthetics and function. Plus, they provide a host of benefits that other tooth replacement systems just can't match. The visible part (crown) is custom-made to enhance your smile — but the real beauty of dental implants goes much deeper.

Best Long-Term Solution

With the highest success rate of any tooth-replacement option and a track record spanning decades, dental implants are the best long-term solution to missing teeth. Properly cared for, implants can last the rest of your life — that's what makes them such a good value.



Titanium Fuses to Bone

Through the natural process of osseointegration, the titanium metal of the implant actually becomes fused with the living bone cells of the jaw. This remarkable union forms a strong and durable anchor for your new teeth.

Dental Implants Replace Tooth Roots

Because they become integrated into the bone itself, dental implants actually stop the bone loss that inevitably follows tooth loss. Implants look, feel, and function just like natural teeth. Preserving bone structure helps preserve your appearance — and your confidence.

After the teeth are prepared for crowns, it can take a few weeks for the dental lab to make them and then send them back to the dentist. But in the meantime, Heather received a set of temporary crowns to wear home that day. When she looked in the mirror, she cried tears of joy.

“I was really excited just to get my temporaries — I was ecstatic!” Heather exclaimed. “I never had teeth that pretty — ever.”

With normal-looking teeth, Heather’s life took an immediate turn for the better.

“A week after the temporaries were put in, I got a job,” Heather said proudly. “I hadn’t worked for seven or eight years.” Heather began working as a cashier at Winn Dixie, and has been working steadily ever since.

After three weeks of wearing her temporary teeth, Heather returned to her cosmetic dentist, who removed the temporaries and cemented her final crowns on her natural teeth. He also had a lower partial denture made for her so that she could have functional bottom teeth while her implants continued the healing process. Over the course of months, the implants would gradually fuse to her jawbone in a process called osseointegration (“osseointegration” - bone; “integration” - to fuse to). This would create the ideal foundation for more beautiful dental crowns. In the meantime, the lower partial denture completed her smile and kept her new front teeth from receiving too much stress while chewing food.


In another six months, Heather’s periodontist informed her that the three implants were ready for their final crowns; when he cemented those new teeth in place, the transformation was complete.

“It changed my whole life,” Heather said through happy tears. “The person I was inside all along can now come out. I’m more outgoing, more outspoken — more everything.”

Heather’s smile makeover team included cosmetic dentist Dr. Eric Burgess and periodontist Dr. Robert Karol. Contest sponsors included LK Dental Studio, BioHorizons and Nimbus Dental.



Watch Heather talk about her dramatic transformation by visiting DearDoctor.com

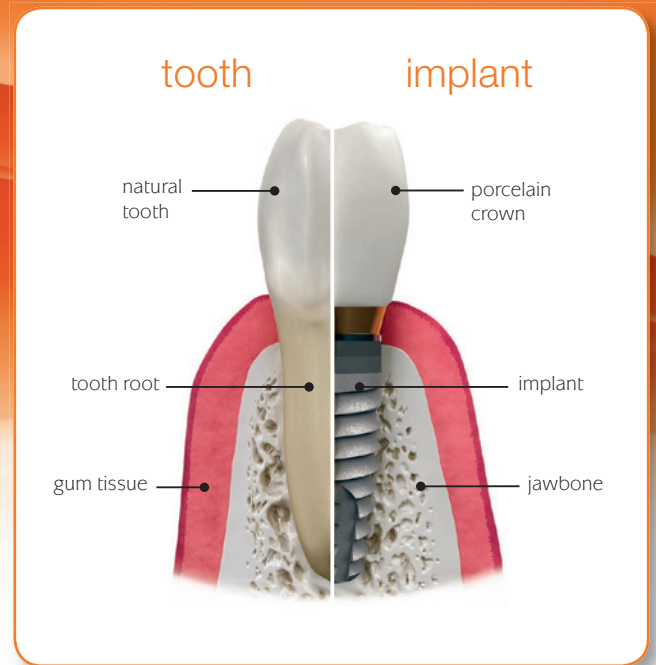


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smile big

be a confident you



dental implants for life

Dental implant treatments can change your life. From a single missing tooth to an entire set of lost teeth, dental implants restore your appearance, speech, nutrition, oral health, comfort, and self-esteem.

So smile big, eat what you want, and be a confident you!

BioHorizons implants carry a lifetime warranty and include our proprietary Laser-Lok® technology. This helps your smile remain beautiful over time.

Ask your dentist or dental implant specialist what options are available to you or visit www.biohorizons.com to learn more.

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