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Thanks to innovative procedures offered by **Alpha Dental Excellence**, patients no longer need to settle for a compromised smile.

page 20



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Thanks to innovative procedures offered by Alpha Dental Excellence, patients no longer need to settle for a compromised smile.

by JILL LUPINE

Advances in technology and technique have transformed modern dentistry into a world of near-infinite possibility. Even if an individual is missing all or most of their teeth, a person's situation is far from hopeless. Far from it, according to Arpan N. Patel, D.M.D., the founder of Alpha Dental Excellence in Bucks County.

In the past, someone with a compromised smile might have had to rely on largely imperfect solutions such as dentures. Today, innovative procedures such as All-on-4® have “changed the game.” Dr. Patel suggests the procedure enables clinicians such as himself to create a new set of custom-made teeth that use four dental implants—hence the name—to attach to the mouth. This method provides a solid foundation and restores the patient's bite so they can talk, eat, and smile with confidence. Of course, the implants can be tailored to match the size, shape, and color of surrounding teeth for a seamless result.

Just as importantly, if not more so, dental implants stop the jawbone deterioration that naturally occurs when a person loses his or her teeth. When implants are placed in the mouth, the medical-grade titanium base fuses with the bone to form a strong and durable bond, thereby preventing bone loss. In other words, the benefits do not stop at enhanced aesthetics.

Dr. Patel suggests All-on-4 may be a suitable replacement method for patients who have lost all or most of their teeth. Some patients may opt for the procedure because they no longer want to invest the time, money, and other resources needed to save what remains of their natural teeth. Others may have already reached the point of no return, so to speak. Likewise, patients who no longer want to contend with the problems and frustrations that come from dentures may find All-on-4 an appealing alternative.

“Patients no longer have to deal with low-quality temporary solutions like dentures, bridges, or partials,” says Dr. Patel. “Because dental implants feel, function, and look just like natural teeth, they have quickly become the new standard in tooth replacement. Also, whereas solutions like bridges or dentures require constant maintenance and need to be replaced every seven to 10 years, dental implants can last a lifetime if they are installed correctly and are well cared for.”

The cost of a procedure depends on how many of the patient's teeth need to be replaced, according to Dr. Patel. At his practice, a single tooth implant costs approximately \$2,500 per implant, whereas a full-arch restoration with dental implants costs approximately \$19,000 or more per arch, depending on the complexity. Regardless of the need, Alpha Dental Excellence strives to lessen the financial impact through monthly payment plans with low or no interest. Every consultation includes financial planning with experts who can maximize the benefits of a patient's dental and medical insurances.

As Dr. Patel puts it, a new and improved smile is not only possible but can also be surprisingly affordable.

Focused on Health, Function, and Aesthetics

Dr. Patel's interest in dentistry began at an early age; he still remembers spending time in his father's practice as a young boy, constructing and playing with dental models. His interest intensified as he progressed through high school and college. He received his undergraduate degree in biology from the University of the Pacific in Stockton, California, and then followed in his father's footsteps by

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earning acceptance into the University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine.

After earning his doctorate in dental medicine, he joined his father's practice, where he further honed his craft. The mentorship he received in highly specialized care enabled him to become proficient in advanced procedures such as full-mouth rehabilitations and restorations. He continued to build his knowledge base over the years, which guided him when he founded Alpha Dental Excellence, a state-of-the-art practice in Langhorne "where superior dentistry meets comfort."

We offer a free consultation and CT scan to every new person who comes here so they have a good understanding of their situation. It never hurts to find out.

—DR. ARPAN PATEL,
ALPHA DENTAL EXCELLENCE

Today, Alpha Dental Excellence offers a comprehensive lineup of general and cosmetic dentistry services, including root canal therapy, oral extractions, and dental implants. Dr. Patel believes the most important service he provides is to safeguard each patient's overall health, including making sure patients understand the undeniable connection between oral health and systemic

health. The growing practice also treats individuals with obstructive sleep apnea, a potentially serious disorder in which the relaxation of the throat muscles causes an individual's breathing to repeatedly stop and start while sleeping.

"My goal as a dentist is make sure each of my patients has the healthiest, most functional, and most aesthetically appealing mouth possible, but health is priority No. 1," Dr. Patel says. "We offer a free consultation and CT scan to every new person who comes here so they have a good understanding of their situation. It never hurts to find out. We want people to come to us and find out what's happening in their mouth, and then they can see how we can help them." ■

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Photography by Gabriela Barrantes

Tailoring Care to Each Patient

Alpha Dental Excellence's mission statement perfectly describes the practice's approach to treatment: "to understand and satisfy the needs of all our patients by developing educated and appreciated patients." To tailor care according to each patient, the practice poses several in-depth questions before a patient takes a seat in the dentist's chair.

Which is most important to you?

- Cosmetic (look of your teeth, smile, and overall aesthetics)
- Comfort (ability to chew without having problems down the road)
- Function (any kind of pain or discomfort chewing)
- Longevity (long-lasting results or keeping natural teeth longer)

When considering having treatment done, which of these is of concern to you?

- Fear
- Time
- Budget
- Lack of urgency
- Lack of trust

What is the most important quality you look for in a relationship with a doctor?

Do you prefer a lot of detailed information or bottom-line information?

Do you suffer from dental anxiety?

Which of the following foods do you enjoy or would you like to enjoy?

- Apples and other fruits
- Corn on the cob
- Ribs
- Steak
- Carrots and other vegetables
- Jerky
- Fruit juices

How ready do you feel to do something about your situation?

"We want to understand the patient so we can meet their expectations and build a long-term relationship," says Dr. Patel. "We want to understand their concerns and constraints before proposing a treatment plan. We don't want to put the patient in an awkward position by suggesting a treatment plan that's not in line with their budget or goals. At the end of the day, we're human beings treating other human beings, so we're going to treat each person who comes to us as though they are a family member."