



suburban life  
**WOMEN**  
 TO WATCH

# Think Ahead

**Dr. Miriam Ting**, the founder of **Think Oral Implants and Periodontics**, takes pride in her ability to improve the health, function, and appearance of even the most compromised smile.

**M**iriam Ting, D.M.D., has lost count of how many smiles she has repaired, improved, or otherwise transformed throughout her career as a periodontist. Each time she sees a patient look in the mirror and smile with satisfaction because of the remarkable turnaround she has made possible, she is reminded of the person who helped guide her onto her chosen career path: her grandfather.

"I chose this profession because of him," says Dr. Ting, the founder of Think Oral Implants and Periodontics, which has offices in Paoli, Swarthmore, and Philadelphia. "This was probably 40 years ago. He would tell me about periodontitis and tooth loss as one gets older, and how implants could be a thing of the future."

Dr. Ting had not yet attended dental school when her grandfather imparted his

suggestion for a career and specialization, but his words meshed perfectly with her desire to pursue a career in dentistry. In the years since, scores of Dr. Ting's patients have benefited because of her expertise in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of periodontal disease.

The stakes are high. In the early stage of periodontal disease, or gingivitis, the gums can become red and swollen, and they may even bleed. As the disease progresses to the more advanced stage of periodontitis, the gums can pull away from the tooth, the bone may deteriorate, and the teeth may loosen or even fall out. Periodontal disease has become a major health issue in the United States; more than 47 percent of Americans ages 30 and older have gum disease, according to a study by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

While minor periodontal issues can be managed by a general dentist, more advanced care is best provided by a highly trained periodontist such as Dr. Ting. Some of her patients' periodontal woes stem from the effects of aging, while others have risk factors such as smoking and diabetes, or take certain medications that may compromise their oral health. With each patient, Dr. Ting underscores the close connection between oral health and general health. Periodontal disease may contribute to serious health conditions, such as stroke, cardiovascular disease, pneumonia, rheumatoid arthritis, and certain cancers.

Dr. Ting uses state-of-the-art lasers and other specialized equipment to perform minimally invasive surgical procedures to treat periodontal disease in all its forms, for soft-tissue grafting, and dental implants. In addition, she specializes in procedures designed to improve the patient's smile and quality of life, such as dental implants and crown-lengthening periodontal surgery.

"Periodontics is like art," she says. "I work in cooperation with other dentists. They refer patients to me, especially difficult cases like a second-molar crown lengthening or soft-tissue grafting for severe recession in the lower anterior where the tissues are thin. Some of these procedures are extremely hard to do. One of my motivations is to specialize in these hard-to-do and technique-sensitive procedures."

Crown lengthening is a procedure to address teeth that appear too short because of gums that have crept over the base of the teeth, producing a gummy smile. Dr. Ting resolves this condition by reshaping the area to expose more of the patient's tooth or teeth, thereby creating a new gum line. This can be done with minimally invasive lasers, and most patients have minimal discomfort postoperatively.

Dr. Ting recalls one recent situation in which a dentist referred a patient to her after another periodontist told the patient that the tissues around her receded lower front teeth were too thin to be grafted. Dr. Ting was able to successfully complete the necessary grafting to solve the patient's problem, and the patient now



## About Dr. Ting

**Dr. Miriam Ting** earned a Bachelor of Dental Surgery degree from the Faculty of Dentistry at the National University of Singapore in her native Singapore, and later earned her D.M.D. with Magna Cum Laude from the Temple University Kornberg School of Dentistry. She also completed specialist training in Advanced Periodontology and Implantology, and received a M.S. in Craniofacial Biology at the University of Southern California.

Dr. Ting is a diplomate of both the American Board of Periodontology (ABP) and the International Congress of Oral Implantologists (ICOI). She is board-certified by the ABP and the ICOI as an expert in the field of periodontology and implantology.

She is the founder and director of the Think Dental Learning Institute, which provides evidence-based continuing education to help dental clinicians provide high-quality care. In addition, she is the founder and president of Magnifico Oral Health Foundation, a nonprofit organization devoted to oral health education for the underprivileged community in improving oral health and reducing tooth loss. The foundation enables her to help others maintain their oral health, their smile, and their ability to enjoy chewing their food.

Dr. Ting is not only a skilled clinician but also a respected educator. She has a faculty appointment at the Department of Periodontics at the University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine. She is also the attending periodontist for the Graduate Program Residency at Einstein-Jefferson Hospital. She enjoys imparting her clinical and research experience to the residents.

"looks and feels great."

In addition to her skills as a periodontist, Dr. Ting's friendly, calming demeanor helps to reassure even the most nervous or phobic patients. For some, she will offer nitrous sedation, a mild sedative agent that helps to safely and effectively mitigate anxiety during treatment.

"Lots of patients are scared of surgery, and want the assurance that they are in capable hands," she says. "I use a soft and calming voice to explain to patients what we will do together. I let them know they have control of the situation. If they are uncomfortable at any time they can just signal me, and I will ensure that they are comfortable immediately."

For dealing with gum recession, Dr. Ting uses minimally invasive techniques to perform most soft-tissue grafting procedures. "We can do multiple teeth in one visit," she adds. "We use platelet-rich growth factors that stimulate natural tissue growth and enhance healing. We also use the most advanced technology with different types of lasers to biostimulate the tissue to reduce pain and inflammation."

Dr. Ting has been an educator throughout her career. She founded her teaching institute, the Think Dental Learning Institute, through which she helps fellow dentists better serve their patients through continuing dental education. Her commitment to education extends to her patient population, as she makes sure each patient understands their unique situation, their options for improvement, and how to manage their oral health going forward.

She enjoys being an integral part of a patient's transformation. She cannot help but notice when a patient first visits her with periodontal issues; they often lack confidence in their smile to the point of covering their mouth when speaking.

"But once their teeth are done, there's a cheerfulness about them," she says. "They put on makeup, dress better, and smile more. Their lives change. There is nothing better than seeing a patient's life change for the better. It makes me smile seeing them smile." ■

## Think Oral Implants and Periodontics

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