

New Teeth at 58 - whoopeeee!

I am 58 years old and suffer from what is thought to be Anhidrotic ED, although maybe a carrier with milder symptoms than some. My hair was always very thin and wispy as a child; although long hair has never been an option, it has improved with age and not too out of place now with current fashions for short hair.

My skin is a bit of a problem with palms and soles of the feet being particularly troublesome with dryness and cracking; they definitely don't like cold weather (but I'm looking forward to trying the Tips' advice in latest newsletter). Hands, feet and face sweat more than most... but more usual sweaty places generally aren't.

Biggest problem was always teeth or rather a lack of them! Only two second teeth - front upper and these pointed and completely round; for the rest my first teeth just had to last till I was early 30s. Then with the help of a very sympathetic dentist (who was quite excited about seeing what he said would probably be the only case in his professional career) I had the remains of the first teeth extracted and dentures fitted - much better than before and these served me pretty well until about 5 years ago. A Dermatologist then referred me to Sheffield Charles Clifford Hospital because I was having problems with the lower denture in particular (not much gum margin to speak of so getting lots of ulcers as the gums receded with age).

Mr Patel and his colleagues in Restorative Dentistry at Charles Clifford were wonderful! They fitted dental implants to my lower jaw and then a removable prosthesis (my choice - could have been fixed) with a more normal denture for the upper teeth. The only downside was that I was initially advised it would take about 13 months and in fact it took nearly 4 years in all - partly, I think, because they are so busy and also because cases like me are evidently very tricky (I was flattered that I wasn't just 'run of the mill'). I also had to make lots of 6 hr round trips to Sheffield from my home in Alford, Lines but I appreciate this is very specialised work and they did their best to give me much longer than usual appointments. I do have to be very careful regarding cleaning the dentures and implants but I don't find this a problem.

I now have the best looking teeth I have ever had, which my friends say are a huge improvement and pretty natural looking, and I can actually chew food - great stuff! 'Normal' friends of my age are worrying about losing their teeth but I have no worries on that score at all. I am really glad that Charles Clifford were willing to take me on and I only wish that my NHS dentist for the past 20 years or so had made some enquiries as he had advised me that I was not entitled to implants on the NHS unless it was for trauma or cancer - not true (although not all patients are suitable for implants). I think similar treatment earlier would have done a lot for my confidence when I was younger and more self conscious about my rather 'old ladyish' appearance around the mouth. Now I am nearing the 'I Shall Wear Purple' phase - having new teeth and a much improved face shape is a real bonus!

So - for any adults out there in a similar position I would say 'go for it.

Sarah Harley