

JEFFREY E. FELLNER DDS
DUSTIN PUTNAM, DMD
RONALD K. SHELLEY DMD MAGD



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Dental hygienists stressing the importance of [flossing](#) is not new. A benefit that is seldom mentioned is that flossing can be inexpensive plastic surgery! The following is an article by Lisa Zamosly entitled "Forget Botox. Floss Your Teeth!"

If you're like most of us, your dental hygienist scolds you every six months for not flossing. You hear the warnings that sticky plaque tucked between your teeth can lead to gum disease and health problems, but still you have trouble squeezing it into your daily routine.

But here's some news that may inspire you to remember: Flossing your teeth, experts say, may do more to fight the effects of aging - at least over the long-term - than plastic surgery.

If you're not flossing every day, you're leaving 40 percent of your teeth surfaces dirty - coated with gummy bacteria - and that causes staining and yellowing between and around teeth, explains Dr. Eugene Antenucci, a dentist in Huntington, N.Y., and spokesperson for the Academy of General Dentistry. An overgrowth of plaque can also lead to gingivitis, the first stage of gum disease, which creates inflammation, bleeding and tenderness in gum tissue that can lead to gum recession and bone loss. "You register an older look because you see more spaces, less and uneven gum tissue," according to Antenucci. Hence the quaint term for aging, "long in the tooth."

And matters can get even worse. Gum disease can eventually cause the bones underneath to dissolve away, explains Dr. Donald S. Clem, a dentist in Fullerton, Calif. "When gum disease begins to eat away at the bone, there are changes in facial appearance. Once a tooth is lost the bone has no reason to be there," says Clem, who is also president-elect of the American Academy of Periodontology Foundation. "In later stages of periodontal disease we would see disfigurement in terms of caving in of the lips and cheek and wrinkles around the lips and cheeks."

And don't count on plastic surgery to save the day. In a recent study in the journal Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, researchers found that bone loss in the jaw, as well as the eye sockets and cheeks, aged people in ways

that cosmetic procedures that tighten and plump the skin, can't fix. "Even if tooth replacement is considered after a tooth is lost, there might not be enough bone left to place an implant in the most aesthetically desirable place," says Dr. Laura Torrado, a cosmetic dentist in New York City.

Flossing won't give you the immediate gratification of Botox or Restylane, Antenucci acknowledges. But who really care if you've got smile lines when you're missing teeth?

Our recommendation: keep flossing! For further information, please visit our [website](#) or give our office a call at 623-362-9616. We would love to answer any questions.

We wish you good health,

Sincerely,

Ronald Shelley DMD
Arrowhead Lakes Dentistry PC

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