

# TOOTHFULLY. *speaking*



Dr. Preety Desai

The upcoming J E M H (Journal of Ethics in Mental Health) conference in Kamloops brings to light many aspects of ageing gracefully both emotionally, physically and cognitively.

The cliché term “getting long in the tooth” refers to the

ancient philosophy that one loses their teeth directly proportional to the rate at which one chronologically ages. But this is far from the truth today.

A healthy and fully dentate mouth is able to SMILE for you, CHEW salads and meats for you; but also improves your digestion and increases your longevity with the variety of foods you can ingest and digest. This most importantly maintains your dignity!

Maturing in actual “years” does not mean your body nor your mouth ages at the same rate! Researchers have shown that the healthier your mouth is and the more teeth you keep in your head the better you stave off Alzheimer’s, dementia, Parkinson’s disease but also heart disease and cancer.

Researchers have identified that Alzheimer’s disease which is classified as “inflammation of the brain” can be tracked back to oral bacteria, herpes viruses or oral yeasts causing periodontal disease. These microbes find their way through the blood-brain barrier and Dr Olsen at the University of Oslo has published on this.

Once you know this, the motivation to go to the periodontist, who knows MORE about gums and gum disease better than any other dentist, should be a natural choice for you. Even if you have lost no, some or all your teeth..... maintaining your oral health even with dentures is key to your overall health. With dentures, the risk of candida infections is high and thus removing your dentures at night is a MUST. If the lack of chewing or taste is an issue, you might want to consider a simple cheap conversion to an implant supported denture with you own dentures for better chewing function.

If you have lost some of your teeth, maintaining what is remaining is also critical compared to the old days when you just called it quits on your remaining teeth and got full dentures. Research shows you live longer, better and happier with even SOME of your own teeth in your head.

And finally the more teeth you have: maintaining them means you have the best quality of life all round. See the periodontist to ensure that you are privy to the latest laser technology to keep your OWN teeth smiling. This is still the best bang for your buck!

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