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## Smile big with dentures

Customizing your dentures can restore looks and lead to a happier you.

*by Dr. Susan Maples*

Q: My mom is elderly and she lives with us now. I notice she doesn't chew her food well and she says her dentures are really loose. She feels it's a hopeless situation and I'm not sure what to tell her.

A: Chewing is ever so important for the elderly—it's the first step in the digestive process. And ill-fitting dentures are just a drag. Sometimes the solution is a simple "reline", refitting of the existing dentures. And sometimes new dentures are the answer.

Most people are displeased with some aspect of their existing denture. They often feel disappointed that they didn't have much say in its creation. Making dentures can be such fun, especially with an advanced process called the "Turbyfil Modified Branching Technique". I like to work in collaboration with each person to restore their appearance, speech and comfort, to just the way nature intended it. We begin with old photographs and identify unchanging "landmarks" to help us know just where the teeth belong in the face. Even the internal fit of the denture is functionally correct. It is made from an impression captured in action (during chewing, talking, smiling, swallowing, etc) rather than an impression that is pressed into the tissue for a few minutes while the patient is holding still. Predictability, comfort and satisfaction are finally possible.

I might mention that there are some patients who have difficulties with their lower denture because their lower jaw bone has shrunk over the years. Hooray for dental implants! Placing as few as *two* root-like fixtures in the lower jaw can give the seasoned denture-wearer a whole new feeling of stability and confidence. It's just awesome.

I encourage you to visit a dentist with your mom to explore all the possibilities for a prettier and healthier her!