

ADVERTISEMENT

seniors



Long in the tooth

Act now to take a bite out of future dental bills

A dental savings account may be key to lifelong care

The best thing to save for old age may well be your teeth.

Whether they are natural teeth, porcelain veneers or dentures, they help you to chew and sustain nutrition.

But whatever you did to take care of your teeth and gums in the first 50 years of your life will not suffice for the next 50, says Dr. Gary B. Solomon, a Dallas dentist.

"Not many of the fillings and crowns we dentists do can last 20 years with cer-

tainly, so you can expect to replace your dentistry at least every couple of decades," Solomon says. "If you are 65 years old — with advances in medicine and wellness — you should plan to live at least to 85 or longer, so the dental work you have at 65 will probably have to be redone later. If you don't have dental insurance, you'll have to pay for it out of your savings."

As people get older, their dental work gets more expensive, Solomon says. "In my practice, we see more and more root canals and implants for people over the age of 40.

Crowns, partials and full dentures will have to one day be remade."

One preventive measure Solomon suggests is a dental savings account.

"For less than the cost of a cup of coffee a week, you can put away enough each year to have your new smile paid for when you're getting long in the tooth," he says. "Just a few decades ago, half of all seniors had no natural teeth remaining. Today it's one out of four. People

now are aging with a full set of teeth, which makes proper dental care even more critical."

Other good dental hab

include brushing and flossing after eating; visiting the dentist twice a year; checking your mouth for red, swollen, or bleeding gums; treating dry mouth

and quitting smoking.

To learn more about advances in dentistry that can give you a healthy smile at any age,

“ Not many fillings and crowns can last 20 years with certainty. ”



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