

THE EVOLUTION OF DENTISTRY PART 1: DENTURES

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Sun Times
May 2018

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Dentistry has come a long way since the days of knocking out a rotten tooth with a rock. As humankind's knowledge of dental care advances with each passing day, patient care gets more effective, accessible, comfortable and aesthetically pleasing.



Dentures have been made from wood, ivory, wolf teeth, gold and many other materials.

Dentures have long been a popular and necessary dental appliance, and have been made from a wide variety of materials, as we'll see in this first part in a series on the evolution of dentistry.

Dentures are removable tooth replacements that rely on retention on underlying bone structure or other teeth. They've been an important dental treatment for millennia because they restore chewing and speaking ability and eliminate gaps in smiles.

Possibly the earliest evidence of dentures dates to around 2500 BC in present-day Mexico. They were fabricated with what were likely wolf

teeth. Human and animal teeth were strung together on wire or bands in Italy beginning around 700 BC. Similar denture materials were found in Egyptian tombs.

The use of wooden dentures was recorded in Japan from the 16th to 20th centuries.

Around 1700 AD, ivory made of hippopotamus, elephant or walrus tusk started becoming the go-to material. Dentures made partially or completely of ivory continued to reign for years to come. In the 1800s, patients preferred "Waterloo teeth," human teeth named after the

those pulled from soldiers killed in the Battle of Waterloo.

Contrary to popular belief, George Washington, the first president of the U.S.A., didn't have wooden teeth, but a combination of human, donkey and horse teeth fitted onto a plate of hippopotamus ivory.

The first porcelain dentures originated circa 1774, but weren't popular because they were fragile. In 1820, goldsmiths improved upon the concept by attaching porcelain tooth forms to sturdier gold plates.

After the 1850s, rubber Vulcanite



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became a reliable base for porcelain teeth. Moving into the 20th century, acrylic plastic became the standard, both for the base and eventually also the teeth. This remains the most popular form of dentures today. The newest technology relies on digital scans, computer design and 3D printing.

Tao Sun DDS provides partial and full dentures services. Call us at (760) 810-7297 to make an appointment for a dentures consultation.

