

# **HOMETOWN**

# **NEWS**

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## **Dentist sinks teeth into new procedure**

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By Rita Hart

Staff writer

STUART - Jensen Beach resident Mary Schmidt was only 18 years old when she became a veteran of numerous dental procedures, including several root canals. The difficult decision was made to pull all her teeth, and she was fitted with dentures. This year, at the age of 56, Mrs. Schmidt, a registered nurse at Martin Memorial Hospital, began to suffer pain and numbness in her face, because her gums were receding and her dentures were hitting facial nerves. She visited a Stuart oral surgeon for help, and it was there that she learned about a revolutionary new procedure called "Teeth in an Hour," a dental implant procedure using technology developed by Nobel Biocare, combined with a protocol developed by Dr. Thomas Balshi of Ft. Washington, Pennsylvania. Mrs. Schmidt was happy to learn from her oral surgeon, Dr. William Lippisch, that the first dentist to use this procedure on the Treasure Coast, Dr. Daniel J. Velinsky, was located in Stuart. "It is the best thing ever invented," said Mrs. Schmidt. "For years, I worried about my teeth and gums. I lost them very young, and as a nurse, I worried about what I'd be like when I was 80. I cried because I was so happy that they could do this."

Dr. Velinsky, a graduate of Tufts University School of Dentistry who has had his practice in Stuart for over 26 years, received training on the new procedure in Pennsylvania, from Dr. Balshi himself. Dr. Velinsky described the process of giving those with dentures permanent teeth in as little as one hour. "We take a CT scan, which takes about 20 seconds. Then we take the two dimensional pictures from the CT scan and make a three-dimensional model of the patient's jaw," said Dr. Velinsky. From that three-dimensional model, Dr. Velinsky works with one of two surgical groups in Stuart to conduct a "virtual" surgery on the model itself, using a computer. After determining from the model

where the implants and teeth should be placed, he sends the model to Sweden, home of the Nobel Biocare company. The company then makes a guide and sends it back to Dr. Velinsky. The guide contains holes in it that will align with the implant, allowing the prosthesis, or permanent teeth, to be stabilized in the patient's mouth. Titanium screws will hold the prosthesis in place.

From this guide, Dr. Velinsky makes a model of the patient's mouth, which is exact within 6/100 of a millimeter. From that model, he makes the actual teeth. The teeth are then sent to Nobel Biocare in Sweden, who will make a titanium bar on which the teeth will sit. The entire process takes four to six weeks. However, the process is called "Teeth in an Hour" because the minimally invasive surgery itself takes approximately one hour, after which the patient returns home. Recovery is simple and patients are able to return to work quickly. The initial set of implanted teeth is temporary, to make sure that the implants are properly placed and that the patient doesn't reject them. The permanent prosthesis is put in place approximately three months later. "It's not a denture," said Dr. Velinsky. "It stays on. Patients cannot take them out. We match the color of the gum, and you can't see the difference, as opposed to dentures." Mrs. Schmidt was surprised at the recovery process, after her implant in June. "I was amazed because there was no pain after the surgery, just a little pressure. And the teeth feel like your own." Mrs. Schmidt, who has the implants on the bottom jaw of her mouth, is anxious to return to have the upper teeth implanted as well. "The difference is like night and day," said Mrs. Schmidt. "I don't have to use Fixadent and can eat everything. There are no restrictions, and I'm so much more confident. I'm smiling more." Dr. Velinsky, who enjoys working with the older population, is an expert in cosmetic dentistry. "I'm changing the look of people's faces by giving them support where they didn't have support before. It's such an important process to me, I've decided to gear my whole practice to it now."

The procedure is expensive, costing \$30,000 each for upper and lower jaw implants. However, Dr. Velinsky, whose office does offer outside financing, explains that the cost covers everything, including the CT scan, surgical expenses, and fees to both him and the surgeons who perform the implant surgery. "It is a large bit to think about, but on the other hand, if I was going to do cosmetics for you, veneers for your front ten teeth would cost \$15,000, and most likely, you would have to have it done again in your lifetime."

Daniel J. Velinsky, D.M.D., has an office at 800 S.E. Osceola St., Suite B, Stuart. For more information on "Teeth in an Hour," contact Dr. Velinsky at (772) 283-4000, or visit [www.drvelinsky.com](http://www.drvelinsky.com).