Until recently, the placing of dental implants was based on an educated guess. Today, thanks to cone beam CT scan three-dimensional technology, implants can be placed with total precision—and they’re more affordable.

Although Hans Hospel was not delighted with his poor, hopeless periodontal diagnosis, he agreed with it wholeheartedly.

“It was about a year and a half ago, during a standard cleaning, that my general dentist recommended I schedule an appointment with Dr. Yu,” remembers the retired industrial engineer.

Robert J. Yu, DMD, is a board-certified diplomate of the American Board of Periodontology and is a diplomat and fellow of the International Congress of Oral Implantologists. As a periodontal specialist, he focuses on gum disease and the surrounding structures of the dentition (gums and bone) at Tampa Bay Dental Implants & Periodontics, Center for Laser Periodontics & 3D Imaging in St. Petersburg. He is one of the few board-certified periodontists in the Tampa Bay area.

Dr. Yu was very informative and enlightening,” recalls Hans. “He was very straightforward, and I appreciate that. He was clear that my bottom teeth had deteriorated and my gums were not in good shape. He said my lower teeth were not doing me any good and that they would just cause more problems in the future. In order to make repairs, he said he would recommend extracting my lower teeth and placing implants that would secure a set of dentures.

“It sounded very good. As an engineer, I quickly recognized the benefits of his plan. My conclusion was that Dr. Yu was right.”

Before Dr. Yu extracted Hans’ lower teeth, he had a set of temporary dentures made so that Hans would not be without teeth during his treatment.

Following the extractions, Hans had his implants precisely placed, using software with CT scan technology.

Cone beam CT technology
Dr. Yu acknowledges that his office offers the most state-of-the-art technology available in dentistry today, and notes that cone beam technology for patient imaging, diagnostics, and treatment is rapidly becoming a vital element in dental practices.

“For decades, we have used x-rays in dental practices,” observes Dr. Yu. “Of course, x-rays are a two-dimensional image of a three-dimensional object, and while x-rays could tell us a lot, there is still that third component of depth that they didn’t provide.

“For the past 30 years, CT scanners have become more and more prevalent in the practice of medicine, but not so in dentistry, points out Dr. Yu. “In fact, it wasn’t until about a decade ago that a technology was developed that could even capture three-dimensional images of precise areas of the mouth, sinuses, and throat in a reliable, affordable way.”

He adds that this carefully controlled, cone-shaped beam emits very low doses of radiation: “The exposure to the patient is only a fraction of a typical medical-grade CT scan, and even the Panorex film x-rays that are still typically used in most dental offices emit approximately twice as much radiation as some cone beam technology. So for me, switching from the film-based Panorex to the cone beam provides me with an additional dimension of crystal-clear information while exposing our patients to less radiation.”

Another benefit of cone beam technology is that the scan takes only about 20 seconds and the images are reconstructed on the computer screen in less than a minute after that, describes Dr. Yu.

In the dental arena, this newer technology is useful for many different procedures, including implants, periodontics, bone grafting, orthodontics, extractions, and other oral surgeries.

“Traditionally, implants have always required a certain amount of guesswork,” says Dr. Yu. “Relaxing solely on the x-ray, we would have the depth of the bone but we really would not have its width. Further, sometimes tissue can be thick, which leads to the conclusion that there is more bone there than patients actually have. With the cone beam technology, not only can I see the width and depth, but I can also see the angle at which the implant needs to be placed. Therefore, I can pre-plan the types of implants, when and how they will be placed, and choose the exact size for the implants that will be perfect for the bone…no compromises and no guessing. It also alerts me to whether or not there are any small issues with the quality or density of the bone that I should take into consideration before deciding on the types of implants or coatings that I may want to use to better adapt to the particular bone or bone density.”

According to Dr. Yu, this machine also captures traditional panoramic x-rays.

Successful implants
“My implants are working fine,” notes Hans, “and Dr. Yu has been very cooperative in meeting all of my needs.”

“At one point, my dental insurance didn’t provide.”

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For excellent oral health
Dr. Yu and his staff look forward to meeting the readers of Pinellas Health Care News. For more information or to schedule an appointment, please call (727) 584-9722. His office is located at 6700 Crosswinds Dr. N., Suite 200B, in St. Petersburg.

The RealChoice™ Dental Implant Center
Dr. Yu is a member of RealChoice™ Dental Implant Centers, which, he explains, is a group of dental practices joined by a common desire to make the benefits of implant dentistry readily accessible and affordable to patients throughout the United States and Canada. “One of the best benefits for our patients,” says Dr. Yu, “is that we offer FREE implant consults and panoramic x-rays for patients who find us through www.realchoiceimplants.com/Yu.”

Dr. Yu considers cone beam technology a vital element in dentistry today.

For more information, please visit www.tampabayperio.com

TAMPA BAY DENTAL IMPLANTS & PERIODONTICS

Dr. Robert J. Yu, DMD

Diplomate of the American Board of Oral Implantologists

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