

## Down, But Not Out (of Sight)



by William J. Schlotz, D.D.S.

An attractive female senior patient recently stated "I notice with age my lower front teeth have become crooked. Why is this and what can be done about it?"

When Dizzy Gillespie played trumpet his cheeks would blow up like a bull frog. Medical text books actually named this condition "Gillespie Pouches."

Employing a similar liberty in medical designation, I officially named crowded, adult lower front teeth "Gore-Teeth" after seeing Al Gore on Larry King one night displaying what looked like three rows of lower teeth. Certainly not an attractive look unless, of course, you favor sharks.

Why does age related shifting occur? Aging seems to exacerbate crowding in the anteriors due to a remodeling of the chin bone over time. As the bone subtly changes shape and relocates, carried with it are the very small roots of the lower anterior teeth.

You may not think your lower teeth show, but try this: Recite the alphabet while watching yourself in a mirror. When you speak you'll see that you display your lower anterior teeth quite prominently.

The lowers become more visible as we age for a couple of reasons. The elastic proteins (Elastin) in our skin are lost with age. Without Elastin, aged skin becomes less able to withstand gravity pull. This results in sagging around the mouth. The uppers remain more covered, while the lowers become more visible.

Correction of this problem has become one of the top reasons why an adult consults a cosmetically oriented dentist. Treatment choices include orthodontics, porcelain veneers or bonding. A nightguard might work if you are just interested in stabilizing the teeth. You should discuss the pros and cons of each treatment option with your doctor.

For "Gore-Teeth" photos or other information feel free to contact my office or visit my website.

*Dr. William J. Schlotz, DDS*  
*Plaza Health Dentistry 314.843.0500*  
*9420 Watson Road, Crestwood.*  
*TheConservativeDentist.com*