

A revolutionary new smile in one hour

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Margaret Chambers: Jaw surgery has changed her life

Dental implants are increasingly popular - 11 million Britons wear dentures - but they take months of preparation, including general anaesthetic and surgery. Margaret Chambers is one of the first people in Britain to have Teeth-in-an-Hour, a new computer-aided technique that fits implants without cutting or stitching gums.

Mrs Chambers lives in Weymouth, Dorset, with her husband, Kenneth, a retired vicar. Here, she tells **JENNY HOPE** about her experience, and her dental specialist Dr Eddie Scher explains the procedure:

THE PATIENT

For some years I've had trouble with the teeth in my upper jaw. They were in a terrible state and kept falling out. Finally, two years ago, I ended up with denture and my problems started.

I had my first plate fitted in September 2004, followed by two more and ended up with a full top plate. My dentist said there was nothing more the NHS could do for me and I should go home and pray.

The problem was the small size of the ridge of my jawbone. It meant the plate would not stay up and I had to use a sticky glue to retain it. I was in despair every day.

The stuff I was using took ages to apply and get off again, and it didn't always work. I have a busy life helping my husband, who visits churches up and down the country, and it became difficult having a normal conversation with people.

I lost a stone because I couldn't eat properly. It was a rough time and my family - I have three grown-up children and three grandchildren - and friends were really worried about me.

I changed dentists and my new one, Dr Michael Marques, had been a student of Eddie Scher's where he'd heard about Teeth-in-an-Hour. He thought I'd be suitable. It gave me confidence that Dr Scher had a world-renowned reputation.

Kenneth and I travelled to London last October for an initial consultation and I discovered I was a difficult case because of the small amount of bone in my upper jaw.

But, though it wasn't straightforward, Dr Scher decided he could do it. I was thrilled: finally I could start to think about an end to the problems I'd been having.

He explained the idea behind Teeth-in-an-Hour and how the implants were inserted using a new procedure guided surgery. It was amazing to hear there were going to be no incisions or stitches and I would walk out the same day with a new set of permanent teeth.

Dr Scher did a CT scan where I had to lie on a bed which moved me through a circular X-ray machine, with only my head going inside. It took about ten seconds.

In January, I got clearance for the operation and Kenneth and I went up to town the night before because it was an early start.

I felt rather anxious on the morning of January 27, but I was determined not to back out. Just after 8.30am I was given a local anaesthetic. I also had an antibiotic drink to prevent infection.

There was no pain - in fact, I didn't feel anything - while Scher was working in my mouth, but I did know he was screwing the implant posts in by sensations.

He told me when he was putting in the final one and then the bridge. It was a fascinating process. When he finished, he asked Dr Marques for his verdict and he said: "They are really beautiful." And they got me a mirror.

I was really pleased with the way I looked - it was so natural - and this was only a temporary bridge. Dr Scher wanted me to have a try-out to make sure the final one was perfect. I went for the final fitting on April 5 and I haven't looked back. It has changed my life. I'm so happy and smiling. I feel a different person. I can eat everything - I can even bite into an apple.