

A Dentist Can Improve Your Love Life!

Let me start by saying that I'm not going to discuss cosmetics to attract Mr. or Miss Right. Everyone knows that modern dentistry can create beautiful smiles through teeth whitening, bonding, porcelain veneers, orthodontics, etc.

Let's assume that you already found Mr. or Miss Right a long time ago. My question for you is to consider your physical relationship with your spouse, and whether it has changed over the years.

Do you kiss the way you used to and why not? Do you feel good enough to be romantic or do you suffer from chronic pain in your head or face? Do you sleep well in the same bed together or do you even sleep in different bedrooms? Do you have the interest, energy or even ability to have sexual relations the way you used to?

If I didn't have your attention before, I bet I do now. We'll briefly address these questions one at a time. I'll assume also that you are still fond of your spouse.

One of the main reasons people get out of the habit of passionate kissing is chronic bad breath. If one person has a smelly mouth, I guarantee you the other is not going to want to spend much time in a lip lock with them. The most common reason for bad breath is gum disease, which is very treatable. There are other reasons, some medical, but a dental exam is the best place to start.

People who are in chronic pain from any source are not likely to feel romantic. Some chronic pain issues are frequent migraine or tension headaches and also temporomandibular joint or muscle pain (TMJ). Many of these headaches and virtually all TMJ issues are caused directly, or worsened by, bruxism. Bruxism is intense clenching or grinding the teeth while sleeping. Many people who clench will get headaches. If you don't believe me, clench your teeth for just 5 minutes right now, and see if you don't get a headache! People who tend to grind their teeth are more likely to get TMJ issues, but most people do a combination of the two. Drug free, FDA approved and proven effective treatments are available provided by trained dentists.

Does your spouse's snoring prevent you from sleeping well, or has it even forced you into different bedrooms? A great way to reduce or eliminate snoring for many people is with a dentist fabricated appliance. The device holds the lower jaw forward slightly. This opens the space between the back of the tongue and the back of the throat allowing the air to flow much more smoothly and quietly.

If you or your spouse is a loud snorer, who seems to stop breathing for a few seconds periodically during the night, obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) is a possibility. This is a serious condition which will shorten life expectancy and reduce quality of life.

Some side effects of obstructive sleep apnea are high blood pressure, clinical depression, exhaustion, frequent headaches, frequent night time bathroom visits, loss of sex drive,

and erectile dysfunction. If you suspect OSA you should talk to your physician about a sleep study.

The same type of dental appliance to treat snoring is FDA approved and proven effective to treat mild or moderate sleep apnea. Even many severe apnea sufferers will use an oral appliance if they can't sleep with a CPAP machine. Some will use it with a CPAP to be able to turn the air pressure down or to travel with instead of the CPAP.

There you have it. You may not have considered it before, but if your dentist offers these services, you may want to start referring to them as Doctor Love!

Dr David Ward practices comprehensive family dentistry in Big Spring. More detailed articles on each of these subjects have appeared previously in the Herald and are available at his website www.DavidWardDDS.com.