

# Can a dentist give you a facelift?

I know that this seems like a very strange question, but what sounds unlikely is actually very possible. What most people don't realize is how much your teeth support the surrounding facial and neck muscles. Have you noticed increased creases



**Dentally Speaking**  
by Jeffrey S. Haddad D.D.S.

and wrinkles in your face? Specifically, the creases on the side and below the lips, and in the corners of your mouth can start to become prominent. As we get older, and our teeth get worn down, the area between the nose and the chin starts to shorten in length.

The exaggerated version of this is when an older person loses their teeth and takes out their denture and their nose almost touches their chin! They have lost the height and support of their teeth which results in a collapsed bite, loss of facial soft tissue support, and show the cruelty of the aging process. What is truly amazing is when we rebuild these worn-down teeth and restore that facial support. The result is a person that can look 10 years younger, and more importantly, is restored to a higher level of health. Hard to imagine? Please look at Judy's photos before and after her bite was rebuilt and you will start to understand the important role your teeth can play in the overall support of the jaws, head and neck.

How does this change happen? The destruction can actually begin at an early age if a person's bite is not ideal. There are many factors that cause a non-ideal bite including clenching and grinding, lack of orthodontics or relapse, extensive dental work, or even poor sleep and airway problems like sleep apnea. Many TMJ disorders are a result of having a destructive bite which forces the lower jaw in a painful position. People who are suffering from daily headaches, migraines, jaw pain, ear pain and ringing in the ears, and even vertigo could have this collapsed, worn-down bite. After years of this uncomfortable jaw position, the teeth continue to prematurely wear down, fracture, and get shorter and shorter. When this happens, a person's entire face will be affected including their lip support, cheek bones, and chin.

This is NOT the normal aging process. Teeth are not destined to be worn down because of life activities. This is usually due to an excessive grinding habit at night, sometimes as a result of a sleep breathing disorder, or someone who is suffering from a TMJ

disorder. The good news is that if a person's bite is properly rebuilt to a comfortable muscular position, a "non-surgical facelift" can occur. An approach called neuromuscular dentistry, which uses muscle relaxation and computerized jaw tracking technology, allows a dentist to determine exactly where a person's ideal jaw position and bite should be, or maybe where it was 10-20 years ago. This allows the dentist to confirm this proper, comfortable bite, assess the desired facial changes, and then permanently restore the teeth to their ideal size and shapes. This not only results in a beautiful and healthy smile, but also a youthful facial profile and appearance.

Is this premature aging happening to you? What are some of the signs to look for when you are prone to a destructive bite or when one is occurring already?

## How do I know I have a Destructive Bite?

- Worn down, discolored teeth
- Crowded or crooked teeth
- Clenching or grinding your teeth
- Daily headaches, migraines, ear ringing or ear congestion
- Vertigo or dizziness
- Extensive dental work
- Orthodontic relapse
- Muscle tension in the face
- Wrinkles and creases around the lips, cheeks, neck and chin

Most people would never associate their premature aging with a bad bite, but the truth is that this affects



**Judy Before**



**Judy After**

many men and women. This can especially be the case with someone who is suffering from headaches or an undiagnosed TMJ or sleep disorder. Being properly evaluated by an experienced dentist could not only rid you of your daily suffering but could also rejuvenate your appearance by properly supporting your facial aesthetics...taking years off your face. The result is an overall increase in health, quality of life, and as a bonus, an improvement in appearance.

*Jeffrey S. Haddad, DDS of Doolin & Haddad Advanced Dentistry, completed his dental education at the University of Michigan in 2001. Dr. Haddad is a fellow of the prestigious Las Vegas Institute for Advanced Dental Studies.*

*He lectures nationally on cosmetic dentistry, TMJ and sleep disorders and dental implants. For more information, visit [www.rochesteradvanceddentistry.com](http://www.rochesteradvanceddentistry.com).*

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