



Dr Cameron Arnold | Smile Dental

## keep your natural smile

Look after your teeth now and you won't need dentures later.

Maintaining good oral health isn't just about having a nice smile and staying out of the dentist's chair. Healthy teeth and gums are also essential for eating the wide variety of foods our bodies need and our tastebuds enjoy. In fact, researchers estimate that people who retain their natural teeth live an average of up to 10 years longer because of better nutrition and therefore better health.

Poor oral health and hygiene can lead to problems ranging from communication difficulties to debilitating diseases. But with the right care, both at your dentist's and at home, you can look forward to keeping your natural smile for life. Maureen Balue is living, smiling proof.

Maureen is one of our many long-term patients. She's fit and healthy and won't mind me saying that, in 72 years, she's lost only one tooth – a considerable achievement.

There's no reason anyone reading this column needs to put up with dentures, now or in the future. Regular visits to your dentist and dental hygienist, combined with carefully following a customised home-care plan prepared for you by your hygienist, will help you maintain your natural smile for life.



But if you do lose a tooth or part of a tooth, whether through an accident, deterioration or disease, there are many solutions for filling the gap. Crowns, bridges and dental implants, for instance, are vastly superior to dentures in appearance, performance and ease of care.

Whatever your age, there are particular aspects of your oral health that should be closely monitored and managed. Of particular concern for seniors are dental cavities (especially on the root surfaces), gum disease (the single leading cause of adult tooth loss), oral disease/oral cancer, dental stomatitis (irritation of the tissue under a denture), dry mouth, tooth erosion and tooth sensitivity (resulting from worn enamel or receding gum tissue).

Whatever your age, I think we can all take a page from Maureen's book. "What's important to me," Maureen says, "is good nutrition, exercise and having fun with family and friends. How sad to think 'I wish I'd looked after my teeth...' Prevention is better than cure."

Couldn't have said it better myself.

**Material supplied by Dr Cameron Arnold, principal dentist at Smile Dental. [www.smiledental.com.au](http://www.smiledental.com.au)**