



As the maxillofacial surgeon for the Phoenix Coyotes, Phoenix Suns and Arizona Cardinals, Dr. Reed Day also specializes in TMJ solutions and dental implants.

Modern Mouth Makeovers

When Phoenix Coyote center Jeremy Roenick shattered his jaw two years ago during a Dallas game, everyone thought he was down for the season and upcoming playoffs. Doctors planned to wire his jaw shut, putting the hockey player out of commission for nearly two months. Surprising everyone, Roenick was back on the ice just two weeks after his injury. Sidestepping jaw wiring, the hockey player underwent an alternative procedure performed by **Reed H. Day, M.D.**, maxillofacial surgeon for the Phoenix Coyotes, Phoenix Suns and Arizona Cardinals.

"After this career-threatening injury, Jeremy was flown from Dallas to see me," says Dr. Day, a Phoenix oral and facial surgeon. Inserting titanium

plates in Roenick's jaw to repair three fractures, Dr. Day notes: "This reduced the fractures perfectly so Jeremy was able to open and close his jaws immediately after surgery. We had him back on the ice for the seventh game of the playoff series. That's fourteen days after his fracture—which is the quickest that any National Hockey League player has ever returned."

Orthognathic Surgery

Roenick's remarkable recovery resulted from techniques used in orthognathic surgery. Just as orthodontics means straight teeth, orthognathic means straight jaws. Dr. Day performs this surgery not only for jaw injuries like Roenick's, but on patients with improper bites, or whose jaws are positioned incorrectly.

"Sometimes the teeth don't meet and mesh correctly," explains Dr. Day, uniquely armed with both dental and medical degrees from Harvard. Orthognathic surgery is being used to treat diverse difficulties, ranging from problems chewing or biting food, swallowing, speech impairments and chronic jaw pain, to facial injuries, birth defects, a receding chin, protruding jaw and sleep apnea, which causes breathing and snoring problems when sleeping.

Dr. Day also routinely performs orthognathic surgery on patients with temporomandibular joint (TMJ) problems, "These are easily correctable conditions for which we perform surgery almost on a daily basis," he notes. "We've had great success with TMJ treatment."

Corrective jaw surgery is more affordable than ever. "In the past, many people have been prohibited from having orthognathic or jaw reconstructive surgery because of the cost," the doctor points out. Hospital costs run about \$25,000—including admitting, operating and recovery fees. "We perform this procedure as safely and effectively on an outpatient basis for about one-third of this cost," says Dr. Day. "We've built our facility sparing no expense, to provide the highest quality of care. We have two operating rooms in my office, where we do the majority of our procedures. And there is a state-of-the-art surgery center downstairs. It's unlike any other surgical facility in the country."

Before the surgery, patients often have their teeth repositioned by an orthodontist, so the teeth will fit together properly when the jaws are surgically repositioned. The surgery lasts one to several hours, depending on the extent and type of surgery needed. In lower jaw surgery, the rear portion or the jawbone behind the teeth is separated and the tooth-bearing portion is moved forward or backward. In upper jaw surgery, the jaw can be repositioned forward, backward, or raised or lowered.

After surgery, patients experience dramatic health, physical and psychological improvements, says Dr. Day: "Besides improvements in speaking, breathing and chewing, the way patients appear is tremendous." The surgery is also a self-esteem booster, particularly for teenagers, adds Dr. Day. "On a daily basis, I see young people with jaw deformities that have made them a little shy and self-conscious. When their swelling after surgery is gone, they're more confident and totally happy with their new look."

Dental Implants

Grab a glimpse of the modern method of replacing missing teeth: Dental implants, made of materials compatible with human bone and tissue. An increasingly popular alternative to dentures and bridges, dental-implant use has nearly tripled since 1986, according to a national survey of oral and facial surgeons.

Behind this growing demand: Long-term implant success and

advances in techniques and materials. Additionally, bridge and denture discomfort and inconvenience are making implants an increasingly attractive option. Points out Dr. Day: "Research shows that 85 percent of people who wear full or partial dentures experience some related discomfort and difficulty."

Dental implants are typically a two-step procedure. First, Dr. Day implants a screw or cylinder, serving as the stand-in for the missing tooth. After a three-to-six-month healing period, the patient returns to get an artificial tooth affixed on top of the implant.

Patients may also opt for implants in a single office visit, where metal tops of the implants extend through the gums while the tissue heals. This eliminates the need for a second office visit, where the implants are instead placed under the gums while the bone heals—followed by a second simple surgery to uncover the implants and attach a post to support replacement teeth.

Today's dental implants "function exactly like natural, normal teeth," notes the doctor. "And the aesthetic aspect is so great that it's virtually indistinguishable from a natural tooth."

Implants are also healthier for the mouth than bridges and dentures, adds Dr. Day. "In the past, if a person lost a tooth, the two healthy teeth on either side would have to be cut down to support a bridge. This left the underlying tooth structure exposed to bacteria and eventual decay. With a dental implant, you're preserving the healthy, natural teeth and also preserving the bone surrounding the area. The dental implant actually stimulates the bone, keeping it from dissolving and preserving the related portion of the jawbone."

Implants are made of titanium, the same material used in corrective jaw surgery. "This is the strongest and lightest metal made," says Dr. Day. "It's the same material used for high-speed jet aircraft and the space shuttle,

providing the longest possible wear and the greatest amount of strength that's known. And the body doesn't recognize titanium as a foreign object."

Combining artistic and scientific skills, Dr. Day offers a complex implant procedure for patients who are no longer able to wear dentures. "Over time, these people have lost their teeth and their bone has started to melt away underneath the denture. They're left with only a thin rim of bone, which dentures can no longer support," he says, noting: "The Bosker transmandibular and Zygomaticus implants are changing lives for toothless people."

Dramatic Dividends

Deriving immense satisfaction from the impact of his surgeries on patients, Dr. Day relates: "Dental implants are changing the way people live. With them, people are rediscovering the comfort and confidence to eat, speak, and enjoy life. When patients go from

having no teeth, or teeth that aren't functional to natural, beautiful-looking teeth, their whole outlook is different." Just as striking is the aftermath of corrective jaw surgery: "I'll never grow tired of seeing young people whose entire lives have been changed from this procedure," Dr. Day relates. "I've attended weddings of two young women I've operated on—who have gone from average appearances to beautiful women." With corrective jaw procedures, he adds: "When the underlying problem—the foundation of the facial skeleton—is corrected, cosmetic changes often occur naturally and are often dramatic."

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