



MY FIRST

IMPLANT

with Timothy F. Kosinski, DDS, MAGD

DR. TIMOTHY KOSINSKI, A GENERAL DENTIST *who has placed over 10,000 dental implants, maintains a thriving practice in Bingham Farms, Michigan. He is also an adjunct clinical professor at the University of Detroit Mercy School of Dentistry and past president of the Michigan Academy of General Dentistry. Here he shares the story of how his first implant case fared and how he built his confidence placing implants.*

David Casper: *Tim, welcome. Good to see you. I know that you have placed more than 10,000 dental implants over your last 25-plus years in private practice, but there had to be a first case. What made you say, “You know what, I’m going to start placing dental implants”? What made that light go on for you, and how did you get started?*

Timothy Kosinski: Well, it’s kind of a funny story. In 1982, when I was a sophomore in dental school, there was a show called “That’s Incredible!” with John Davidson and Cathy Lee Crosby. One time they had a doctor on who was showing this dental implant; this piece of metal that went into the jaw. And I said, “That makes a lot of sense to me.” So, I went to the library, and I got some textbooks. I decided to do a table clinic in dental school. There was one professor who everybody knew did implants: Dr. Paul Mentag. It seemed like voodoo. I went up to him and said, “Would you help me?” He made some suggestions. He even brought me a book the next week. So I did this table clinic, and I won an award for doing it. It always just made sense to me.

I did my residency after dental school, and I was able to work with Dr. Frank Bustillo, who was another implant dentist in Dayton, Ohio. I moonlighted with him as much as I could. I was in his office whenever I could be there, and he was doing blade implants and subperiosteals under sedation.

When the residency was finished, Frank had intended on me staying with him, but unfortunately, he passed away. It was very, very sad. His wife took me to lunch and actually gave me a textbook from the 1920s. She said, “Frank would’ve wanted you to have this.” I still treasure that book.

So, I worked with Paul Mentag. He hired me as an associate back in 1985. I was able to observe him and Dr. Axel Kirsch working with the old IMZ® Implant System (Friatec;





Mannheim, Germany). Paul was the implant guy in Detroit, so I was very blessed to be able to see a lot of cases. And in those days implants didn't come sterilized; you had to put them in the autoclave.

DC: *Right. So how did your first implant case come about?*

TK: The first actual implant case that I did all by myself was on my dad. He had worn teeth, so he had a partial. But he hated it, and he wanted to feel younger and virile.

I'd always tell him about the things that we were doing. One day, he said, "Let's do it. It's time." He let me take some teeth out and place a whole bunch of implants in him. An old friend of mine, Dr. Lawrence Sowinski, down in Indiana restored the case. And it was amazing.

DC: *So how many implants did you place in your father?*

TK: I think it was six.

DC: *So for your first implant case, you placed six implants?*

TK: I think it was six implants and a bridge.

DC: *At least it was a relative.*

TK: It was my dad, and he was thrilled. And, you know, we had issues. At times the teeth were a little bit long, and we would have to shorten them. And sometimes those intraoral elements would break or loosen. But he never complained. He was always wonderful about it, and I think he really appreciated having something fixed in his mouth, even way back then. That was 1985.

DC: *Wow.*

TK: A long, long time ago.

DC: *So that case had to give you confidence, too. It must have made you say, "Hey, this is something I should be doing for patients."*

TK: Immediately. Immediately it did. And unfortunately, we were pounding them in at that time. It was different than

it is today.

DC: *Cylinders?*

TK: Yeah, they were cylinders. It was different. It was more difficult. But patients came to Dr. Paul Mentag's office because very few people were placing implants back then. Certainly there were very few specialists in Detroit placing implants.

DC: *That's great. It sounds like after graduating from dental school, only a few years had passed before you did your dad's case. How long after you did your dad's case was it until you did one on a regular patient that came in?*

TK: Immediately after that. We just started doing them, and I would either assist or would place the implants myself. I certainly restored many cases. It elevated my career. We were doing things that very few people were doing, with materials that weren't nearly as good or predictable as they are today.

DC: *Right. A lot has changed for sure.*

TK: A lot has changed. All positive.

DC: *It's great. Thanks for sharing, Tim.*

TK: Thanks for having me.

DC: *It's been my pleasure. IM*

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