

Advances In Prosthodontics™

New Findings & Best Practices for Cosmetic & Restorative Dentistry

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Do You Have a Patient With Poorly-Fitting Dentures?



Here's the story of a patient who was referred from another dental professional...



Who remembers Felix the Cat? Felix had a *Magic Bag of Tricks* to be used whenever he was in a fix. I often feel like we dentists have our own magic bag of tricks like Felix! This newsletter shares how "tricks" in our dental bag can make complex cases more manageable. One of the things in my bag that I love is a Gothic Arch tracer—you'll see why! If you have a patient with several missing, broken or worn teeth, they may be a candidate for reconstruction with the assistance of a Prosthodontist. **Read more on the next page...**

◆ Do you want another opinion on a complex case? Or to meet and share ideas?

There are many ways we can help each other by working together on complex cases and by sharing knowledge and experience. I'd like to invite you to lunch, dinner, or an office meeting to talk more about a difficult procedure or to share ideas. With your reputation for quality dental care, and my experience with restorative treatments, we can work together on advanced cases and both benefit! I'm looking forward to talking with you on the phone or meeting in person.

Please call or email my office with specific days and times when you are available for a meeting...

CASE SUMMARY: Gothic Arch Tracings and Digital Dentures

by Dr. Maggie Chao, Prosthodontist

Patient “Ben” was referred to me by a colleague in the area who was busy with their patient load, and Ben’s needs became more complex than they wanted to manage. Before coming to my office, Ben had tried 2 sets of dentures. Here’s what happened:

- The dental professional who referred Ben to me fabricated a set of complete dentures, but they did not fit Ben properly.
- Before the second set of dentures was made, Ben was told he needed two implants to better secure the mandibular plate.
- Two implants were placed with locator attachments, but Ben was *still* not able to wear dentures.

When evaluating the removables, it appeared that the occlusion was not well-balanced. I inquired how the CR was obtained and they said by using bite registration material with base plates and wax rims. While this is perfectly workable for many patients, Ben suffered from Parkinson’s disease—obtaining a repeatable CR using conventional methods was nearly impossible.

In remaking his dentures, I made Ben a set of Pala Digital Dentures mostly because of their Gothic Arch Tracer (Figure 1). While Digital Dentures are not new, Heraeus Kulzer has made the clinical workflow easy and I felt that I would still maintain my relationship with my denture technician. It took 3 visits to deliver a Maxillary upper denture and Mandibular over-denture.

In the first visit, the final impressions, VDO, and CR are obtained using Heraeus Kulzer’s proprietary trays. Their trays are fitted with a Gothic Arch tracer which allowed me to obtain the VDO and CR at the same time we made the final impressions (Figures 1-3 are from another patient but examples of the same process). The impressions are sent to the lab. Then the lab scans the impressions and a resin try-in is returned.

In the second visit, I was able to check the denture extensions, fit, occlusion, occlusal plane, incisal edge position, VDO, etc. Don’t forget to warn the patient of the ghostly appearance of these teeth! (Figure 4). Adjustments can be made by cutting off the 3D printed plastic versus working in wax.



Figure 1

Continued on next page...

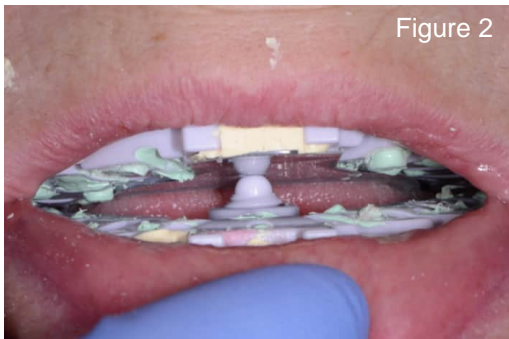


Figure 2

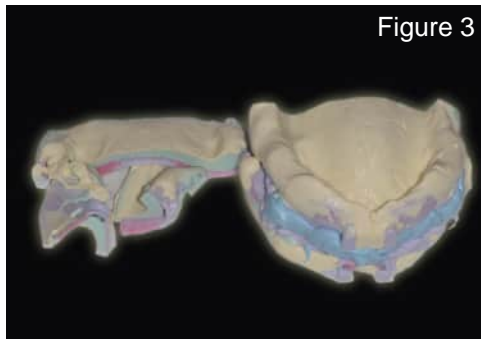


Figure 3



Figure 4

Do you have a patient in Ben’s situation? Or another complex case?

If you have a question about a case and want another opinion, give my office a call. Or, if there’s a case that you want to work together on, please fill out and send in the enclosed referral form.

My office and I will take great care of your patient and keep you informed. Dental professionals refer to me as **The Complex Case Specialist™** because I perform complex cases every day.



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Adjustments were noted on the online portal, the try-in returned to the lab, and the final dentures arrived about 10 days later. After delivery, the patient needed only one post-delivery adjustment. I gave him my full warranty (that I give to all referred patients) and sent him back to the referring doctor's office for regular hygiene visits, noting that he come to our office for an annual exam and maintenance.

Update after 1 year: he dropped his maxillary denture on the floor and it cracked in half. Because it is made of PMMA, a local denture lab was able to repair it, plus add a mesh, all for \$35.

Reflections about this case:

- Truth be told, I don't always use a gothic arch tracing when making complete dentures. I find that when a patient has a repeatable bite, it isn't necessary. But when a person has been wearing ill-fitting dentures for years, their muscles can force their mandible into a more protrusive position making them appear to have a Class III appearance. It can be very frustrating for me and for patients to repeat "close, put your tongue to the roof of your mouth" only to have them jut their jaw forward!
- Here is the skinny on the gothic arch tracing method which was popularized in 1910 by Alfred Gysi. Its two principal parts consist of: 1) a recording plate that is affixed to the maxillary base plate, and then 2) a pointer/tracer attaches to the lower member. As the patient moves their mandible in protrusive, right and left excursive movements, a "chicken foot" pattern marks on the recording plate. The base of the chicken foot is CR. Figures 5 and 6 (below & to right) are an example of a patient that *without* the tracer appears to have a Class III relationship, but *with the tracer* you can see it's more a Class II relationship!
- **If you're interested in hearing more,** I have a short lunch-and-learn presentation that I could bring to your office to share.

As always, I appreciate your interest and support and would love to hear your experience with complete dentures, occlusion, etc!

If you have comments or questions, please email me at: drchao@pleasantonpros.com



Figures 5 and 6



Have A Laugh:

Shark from the "Finding Nemo" movie...

I hope I made you smile during your busy day!

I take the care of patients referred to me very seriously, including knowing how to educate them so they feel comfortable.

It's my goal to help every patient understand even the most difficult procedures, so they can regain the function and esthetics they desire.

Dr. Maggie T. Chao

DMD, Prosthodontist ♦ The Complex Case Specialist™



Dr. Maggie Chao works with dental professionals near Pleasanton and the Walnut Creek areas.

About Pleasanton Prosthodontics:

Pleasanton Prosthodontics is a specialty practice limited to fixed and removable prostheses, dental implants, and all phases of esthetic dentistry. Dr. Chao's prosthodontic training and private practice experience make treatments of complex cases more successful, including the following examples:

- Patients with ill-fitting dentures, severely worn or damaged teeth can receive a single dental implant or a full arch of natural-looking teeth.
- Patients who have suffered from traumatic injury, congenitally missing teeth, or a chronic condition can receive oral prostheses, which may be a combination of dental implants, crowns, bridges, or veneers.
- Patients with severe neglect of their oral health can receive a full reconstruction to restore function & esthetics.



Personal Message To Fellow Dental Practitioners:

“As the referring dentist, you know your patient's mouth and have key insight into your patient's needs. I want to work with you to provide your patients with the best possible treatment outcomes. I will treat your patient in a manner that will reflect well on you and strengthen your relationship with your patient. I am here to make you look good! When your patient's care is completed, they are referred back to your office for their ongoing dental care. I am grateful for your collegueship and trust with your patients!”

◆ Why other dental professionals work with a Prosthodontist

Prosthodontists are specialists in implant, esthetic, and reconstructive dentistry.

1. You have a patient requiring complex treatment outside of your typical practice.

Examples include patients with vertical dimension discrepancies, severely resorbed ridges, inadequate interarch space, TMJ, severe bruxism, traumatic tooth loss, or congenital abnormalities.

2. You have a patient with complex needs that may drain your time.

If your patient may require treatment from several specialists, Prosthodontists can help because they are trained to appropriately stage and manage complex treatment plans.

3. You have a demanding patient who wants perfect esthetics.

Examples include patients with a high smile line or needing a single tooth replacement in the esthetic zone. A Prosthodontist is trained in selecting the best solutions for high-demand patients.

4. You have a question and want to discuss a case with a colleague to ease your mind.

A Prosthodontist can be an excellent resource for you to ask questions because they are trained in many types of complicated treatments. For example, you may want to consult or refer to a Prosthodontist for complex implant-supported restorations. A Prosthodontist can work with you or complete the treatment for you to achieve the best in both function and esthetics.