



# Grin And **LOVE** It!

Experience The Comfort And Care Of A Dental Professional

◀ Dr. Peter Domagala with his staff in the reception area of the Institute of Dental Implants & Periodontics in Gurnee. *Photo by Candace H. Johnson*

## When

you step through the doors of the Institute of Dental Implants and Periodontics in Gurnee, you won't be entering a dental school, but you might learn a thing or two.

Dr. Peter Domagala has a few mission statements at his office, and one of the first is to educate his patients when they walk through the door.

"I have a real interest in educating, teaching and learning," says the University of Illinois graduate who opened his own practice in 1995.

Dr. Domagala could start your education by telling you that 75 percent of the population suffers from periodontal disease — or gum disease — a painless disease whose only noticeable symptoms include a small amount of bleeding when brushing and bad morning breath.

He could tell you that his office uses state of the art equipment that has put his practice on the precipice of cutting-edge technology that helps him perform virtual procedures before a patient even enters the building.

Or he could just educate you about your procedure, as he did with Carol Ward of Ingleside.

The 62-year-old was referred to Domagala by her family dentist because she had a bad infection and had lost several teeth.

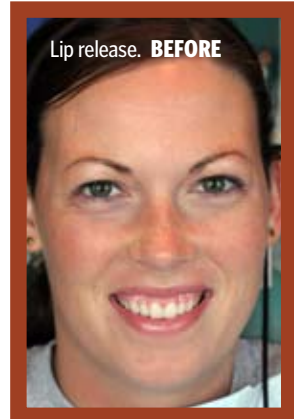
Dr. Domagala gave her several treatment options to correct the problem, and when she chose to have dentures paired with eight implants, he eased her concerns by explaining exactly what would take place.

"He walked [me] through it," Ward says. "Every step of the way — 'This is what I'm doing; [are you comfortable]?' His assistants

would come in [to check on me], and they were [just as conscientious]."

Barbara Blaski, 51, of Lindenhurst, had a similar experience when she visited Dr. Domagala for an implant.

"He just kind of step-by-step, he took me through the whole process," Blaski says. "[Dr. Domagala] was great from start to finish. He just made me feel really comfortable — I felt like I was in good hands. He came highly recommended, and he's very professional, but it felt like I was there with a friend. He made me feel very at home."



## OPTIMAL TREATMENT

Jonathan Martinez, a treatment assistant at the Institute of Dental Implants and Periodontics, says 99.99 percent of periodontal disease stems from inattention. The minute remainder is genetic.

"Lack of education [is a major problem],"

▼ The inviting treatment room. *Photo provided*



Martinez says. "People don't know the proper way to brush their teeth or [understand] the importance of flossing. Over time, symptoms worsen — then their health care providers refer them to us."

"We educate our patients as well as treat them," Martinez continues. "We spend a great deal of time with the patients and their family dentist. We have open, flowing communication ..."

Treating periodontal disease is vital because studies have found links between gum disease and heart disease, says Dr. Domagala — who earned both his doctorate of dental surgery and post-doctorate degrees from the University of Illinois.

"If people have gum disease, they are almost twice as likely to suffer from coronary artery disease," he says. "One theory is that oral bacteria can affect the heart when it enters the blood stream, attaching to fatty plaques in the coronary arteries (heart blood vessels) and contributing to clot formation, which may lead to heart attacks."

"Other studies even have linked gum disease with strokes, premature births, diabetic complications and respiratory diseases such as pneumonia," Dr. Domagala says.

Periodontal disease destroys the gum tissue, which can cause bone and tooth loss. Some patients have such advanced bone loss that tooth

removal and replacement with dental implants is a better and safer long-term option, as was the case for patient Carol Ward.

"The benefits of an implant are multi-faceted. First, they are a more permanent, cost-effective solution over the lifetime of the patient, and they enhance an individual's ability to chew,

which helps with digestion," Dr. Domagala says. "Even the best dentures are only 30 percent as good as natural teeth when it comes to chewing; dental implants are nearly as efficient as a person's own teeth."

"Second, alternative options to replace missing teeth cause additional stress on supporting teeth,

are more difficult to keep clean and can result in future additional tooth loss.

"And finally, implants preserve the existing bone, which is a cosmetic benefit — people with natural teeth or implants have more bone and thus look younger," Dr. Domagala says.

In some cases, Dr. Domagala and his team can actually give a patient a new tooth the same day they walk into the office.

But that's not until after they've had a thorough examination with the patient in which they review the patient's medical and dental history and make sure he or she has adequate tissue to support a dental implant.

Dr. Domagala goes to great lengths to make sure the job is done right, even snapping digital photographs of a patient's existing smile to make sure the implant matches the patient's physical features.

"We do not want people to even know you've had an implant when we're done," he says.

Another tool Dr. Domagala uses to ensure his patients receive the best care is a Cone Beam CT scanner. By taking a CT scan of a person's mouth, he can practice a virtual implant placement before a patient even steps foot into one of his treatment rooms.

Such technology is found in less than half of the surgical offices in the area, most likely because of the cost of the machine, which runs around a quarter of a million dollars, he says.

But to him, it's a necessary piece of equipment.

"I purchased the first machine in Lake County," Dr. Domagala says, noting he purchased his CT scanner nearly seven years ago. "I saw a need. It allowed us to be much more accurate — I can't imagine

◀ A 3-D reconstruction with vital structures highlighted in color allowing Dr. Domagala to perform implant treatment with optimal safety and ideal outcomes. *Photo provided*



doing treatment without it ... there are no surprises. Our outcomes are determined before we even start. It's priceless.

"It's not about money — it's about optimal treatment."

## SMILE!

Dr. Domagala doesn't only perform implant treatments — he also performs cosmetic dental procedures to enhance the smiles of his patients.

For those who have a gummy smile or short teeth, Dr. Domagala can correct the issue.

If a patient has a gum line that is too high — too much gum is showing in his or her smile — Dr. Domagala can perform a lip release so that the lip sits more naturally and excess gum tissue is not seen.

The end result is a beautiful smile full of teeth, not pink gum.

If teeth are too short, Dr. Domagala can lengthen the crown through a process known as a crown lengthening, or the removal of gum tissue. By letting more of the teeth show, a smile can seem fuller and brighter.

For the opposite problem — gum recession — Dr. Domagala can perform gingival grafting to cover up exposed teeth for a healthier smile.

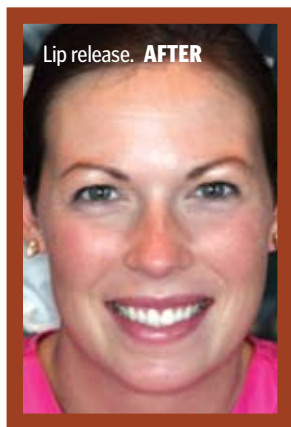
Such treatment is long-lasting, he says, and his work is excellent.

"He's the best clinician I've ever worked with, skill set-wise," Martinez says. "Other providers and former patients who have been here feel that he is the best. It's really incredible."

## THE EXPERIENCE

Carol Ward and Barbara Blaski aren't the only patients who have found their experiences at Dr. Domagala's office to be better than they had expected.

"I knew nothing about implants," says Jim Jobes, 76, of Grayslake — a patient of Dr.



◀ Dr. Peter Domagala in his office at the Institute of Dental Implants & Periodontics in Gurnee. *Photo by Candace H. Johnson*



◀ Dr. Peter Domagala works with Jonathan Martinez, treatment assistant, on finishing up a dental implant on Jim Jobes of Grayslake at the Institute of Dental Implants and Periodontics in Gurnee. **Photo by Candace H. Johnson**

Domagala for the past four years. “My regular [family dentist] said, ‘You’ve got a problem here, and you had best go see Dr. Domagala.’” Now, Jobes is having his fourth implant finished at the Institute of Dental Implants and Periodontics.

“I have to say that he explained and took as much time as I needed to understand the process,” Jobes says about Dr. Domagala. “Also, in my judgment, I felt that he was a consummate professional. He knew what he was doing, so I really had no worry.”

Many patients — including Jobes — have mentioned to office staff that while they may have been somewhat apprehensive about coming to a periodontist, their visits have been almost relaxing.

“It’s attention to detail,” says Mirasol Lingad, Dr. Domagala’s director of professional relations for more than 11 years. “We put a lot of focus on the patient experience.”

That means the environment at the Institute is patient-friendly, with soothing music floating over the speakers and a personable staff waiting to assist anyone who walks through the door.

The treatment rooms feature beautiful, dark wood doors and large windows that face a small pond and the wildlife that accompany it. Frequently, the office staff and patients take a break to look at a passing deer, coyote or a fish jumping in the pond.

Dr. Domagala and his staff put the patient first and truly take their fears and concerns into consideration.

“We are constantly trying to see what we can do to make it better for our patients,” Lingad says. “We listen to our patients — we want to make sure we are attentive so we know what

their concerns are so that we can help them.”

Such attention to detail can be seen even outside of the treatment rooms. Dr. Domagala has formed a SPEAR Study Club based on the model of one of the best dentists in the world — Seattle-based prosthodontist Dr. Frank Spear. Spear — and now Domagala — have formed groups of professionals that meet on a monthly basis to discuss challenging cases and

come up with better solutions for their patients.

But perhaps one of the details that Dr. Domagala’s patients seem to enjoy most is the personal attention he gives them even after the procedure is over.

“He actually called me,” Ward says simply. “After sitting in the chair for hours and going through implants, [I thought he would give me my instructions] and then he would send me home. But he — he personally — called me! ‘Are you OK? Is there any pain?’ He cares; [he told me I] could call him anytime I wanted to. Somebody was always available. I’d highly recommend him to everyone — especially if you don’t like pain.”

“He’s a good doctor,” agrees Lingad. “He cares about the patients. It’s not a business for him, it’s about patient care. You don’t find that in many places.” *lc*

*By Lake County Magazine*



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