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Using a machine called the Cadent iTero, Dr. David Schmidt creates a 3-D image of patient Louise Brearton's teeth and gums.

DENTAL CARE

Device removes need for goopy impressions

By Leslie Mann
Special to the Tribune

If your dentist has ever fitted you with a crown or bridge, you know about the part that precedes the fitting — that sticky tray of goop that you must bite into and keep in your mouth until it forms an impression for the dental lab to make your restorative, as these pieces are known in the industry.

Now a high-tech machine called the Cadent iTero replaces the tray impression. Your dentist swipes your mouth with a wand, which gives a computer a three-dimensional image of your teeth and gums. Then your dentist transmits the image electronically to the lab.

"It is especially good for people who gag with a tray in their mouth," said Lake Forest dentist David Schmidt. "I can swipe a tooth at a time and give them a break."

One of those people is Martha Zeeman of Lake Forest, who was one of Schmidt's first patients to experience the Cadent iTero. "I hate the trays," Zeeman said. "They make me gag, and they taste awful. If I have to have dental work, the [Cadent iTero] is easier. And it's very cool to see the image on the screen."

Schmidt said the electronic device eliminates the occasional need for a second impression when a tray flexes while in a patient's mouth and generates a restorative that doesn't fit. When that happens, both money and time are



Dentists use a wand to take photos of a patient's teeth, one at a time.

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—Dental patient Martha Zeeman of Lake Forest



The high-tech machine eliminates the flawed impressions, which cause patients to lose time and money.

use the Cadent iTero. Schmidt said patients pay the same for their restorations as they would for those made using the traditional method.