Open Wide

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I've always hated going to the dentist, and I'd avoided it ever since childhood. But I've recently been on a journey that makes me want to remind other HIV-positive people to have regular dental checkups.

About four years ago, when swelling from a wisdom tooth extraction didn't subside, my doctor suggested an HIV test. You guessed it—positive. It was December 2007. (The actual day? My 40th birthday.)

I couldn't avoid the follow-up appointment—an infection in my jaw had produced the swelling—but I still delayed due to dental dread. My mistake. Not only did the dentist fix the problem (starting HIV meds helped too), but he also showed me that there is a huge amount of human kindness out there, waiting to be tapped. I also learned that the sooner you seek treatment for a dental problem (or HIV, for that matter), the easier it may be to resolve. No longer will fear keep me from addressing any ill, even if it means climbing regularly into that (formerly) dreaded dentist's chair.

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http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/teeth-dentist-hiv-17261-1833