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## Saving smiles

This is regarding “Golden agers with silver smiles; Senior citizens are finding health benefits to wearing braces. If it makes them prettier, well, that’s nice too” (Page 1, Jan. 1), by Tribune staff reporter Gayle Worland. As Worland points out, orthodontists do a superb job of helping seniors straighten their teeth for easier chewing and prettier smiles.

But the real reason older adults are investing in braces and other dental procedures is that they—like all Americans—value their natural teeth. That’s why more people of all ages also are visiting endodontists, the dental specialists who perform root canals. Root canals can save natural teeth in one virtually painless office visit, eliminating the need for extraction. That’s good news for the 76 percent of Americans who said they would prefer a root canal to tooth extraction in a recent American Association of Endodontists survey. The best news of all, perhaps, is teeth that have undergone root canals performed by endodontists can last a lifetime.

*Sandra Madison, DDS  
President  
American Association  
of Endodontists  
Chicago*