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Tool that 'regrows teeth in a month'

TEETH are being regrown inside patients' mouths after a major medical breakthrough, it emerged yesterday.

They are being regenerated using a prototype ultrasound device, which will ultimately sit on top of damaged teeth to stimulate new root growth.

The technique is intended to help people who have lost teeth through disease or accidents – but it could be adapted to grow new bones.

A fingernail-sized version of the device, which needs to be activated for 20 minutes a day for four weeks,

BY FINIAN DAVERN

should be on the market in two years and cost about £50 plus fitting.

The technology has already been approved for use in Canada and the US, and tested successfully on rabbits, monkeys and humans.

It does not generate enamel and so regrown teeth would need extra dental work to cover them.

Also, it will not work if the root has been lost or removed.

Researcher Dr Tarek El-Bialy, from the University of Alberta in Canada, said: 'We have proved an ultrasound

machine can stimulate growth by encouraging protein and blood production.

'Now, our challenge is to develop, by the end of the year, a device small enough to fit into a patient's mouth.'

His breakthrough, reported in the *American Journal Of Orthodontics And Dentofacial Orthopedics*, has prompted inquiries from dentists around the world.

Dr El-Bialy said: 'I was answering e-mails until I am this morning asking about this. I've just sent them my research papers so they can make up their own minds about it.'