

Dental FAQs

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Dental FAQ

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What are dental implants?

Dental implants are substitutes for the roots of [Missing Teeth](#). They act as an anchor for a replacement tooth or crown or a set of replacement teeth.

Why should one replace missing teeth?

Your teeth were designed to last a lifetime, but sometimes they don't! Replacing missing teeth is important to your general health and to the health of your other teeth. Not only do you lose chewing ability when a tooth is lost, but unreplaced teeth can cause other teeth to be lost, tipped or crowded and create subsequent problems. Also, there are the obvious problems of poor appearance and loss of self-esteem caused by one or more missing teeth.

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What are the advantages of dental implants over dentures and bridges?

- 1. Reduced bone loss** - Normally, the bone tissue surrounding the root of your tooth is maintained by your body's natural renewal process. However, if you loose a tooth, you will be left with a hole where your tooth root used to be and the bone around this area will slowly begin to resorb and may change the shape of your jaw. A dental implant placed in that area can actually stimulate bone growth and prevent loss of valuable bone structure. In some patients where bone loss is substantial a bone graft may be required before placing a dental implant. Bone loss is a problem for people who have dentures and as the shape of the jaw slowly changes the dentures need to be adjusted or re-made to fit the new shape of the jaw. Bone loss can also make a person look older since the area around the mouth can sag as bone is lost
- 2. Improved function** - Once dental implants are fully integrated into your jaw they function just as well as your own natural teeth and you can eat the foods you want and speak with complete confidence. With dentures, eating hard foods such as an apple can be a problem, either the dentures become loose or patients cannot withstand the hard biting forces as they cause pain in the gums. Irritation and inflammation of the gums is a common problem amongst denture patients. Dentures can be supported by implants or mini-implants which will improve function greatly enabling patients to eat the foods they want with complete confidence and not having to worry about bone loss and loose dentures falling out.
- 3. Improved dental hygiene** - Unlike bridges and dentures, which require special cleaning instructions and extra attention, dental implants just need regular brushing, flossing and dental hygiene appointments just like your natural teeth.
- 4. No need to drill or remove any healthy tooth structure** - When replacing missing teeth with

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dental bridges, the teeth adjacent to the gap need to be prepared and healthy tooth structure is removed to accommodate a crown or bridge abutment to fit over the top of the tooth. In the future if one of the supporting teeth is damaged the entire bridge restoration will also be compromised whereas with an implant the restoration is independent of any of your other teeth. By replacing lost teeth with an implant, no support is required of the adjacent teeth, and hence your natural teeth do not need to be prepared or altered in any way

5. **Better aesthetics** - If done correctly a dental implant should be indistinguishable from your surrounding natural teeth. Dentures can come loose and look un-natural if they do not blend with your gums and some bridges and dentures have unsightly metal clasps to hold them in place. Dental implants provide a much better cosmetic and functional end result.

How are dental implants placed?

Dental implants are usually completed in two phases.

1. Phase #1 is the actual implant placement, a process generally performed in the office with local anesthesia or light sedation to help make the patient more comfortable. Using precise, gentle surgical techniques, the implants are placed into the jawbone for 3 to 6 months while osseointegration (bonding to bone) takes place. This helps ensure a strong, solid foundation for replacement teeth. During this time, temporary bridges or dentures may be used to minimize any cosmetic or chewing inconvenience.
2. Phase #2 involves creating and attaching the new tooth or teeth to the anchored implant(s) in your jaw. Dental implants can replace a single tooth, several teeth or complete dentures.

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The Implant Placement Procedure

The Two-Stage Procedure

First Stage - Surgical placement (can be done with a local anesthetic)

Second Stage - Uncovering of the implant

Step 1 The implant is screwed or tapped into a surgically prepared site. The gum tissue is closed over the implant

Step 2 The implant remains under the gum for 3 to 6 months. The patient continues to wear their denture during this period

Step 3 (3 to 6 months later)The implant is exposed by removing a small amount of gum tissue. An insert can be screwed or cemented down into the implant.

Step 4 The secured insert can accommodate various attachments upon which overdentures, bars, crowns, or bridges may attach

The One - Stage Procedure

In step 2, the implant, which is placed, has an additional component which protrudes through the gum tissue. This extension of the implant then does not become covered over during the healing phase. Step 3 (above) is therefore not needed. Step 4 is readily achieved (3-6 months later) by unscrewing the additional component which was placed at the surgery and replacing it with the type of insert that is needed for your case.

How much does implant treatment cost?

The cost of implant treatment depends upon the number and type of implants placed and the type of replacement teeth needed. For example, replacement of a single tooth with implant treatment costs more than a dental bridge. However, the bridge necessitates "cutting down" adjacent teeth for crowns whereas Implant treatment does not. More complex treatment, such as bone grafting, will add to the cost. The cost can vary in different countries, so it's best to consult your dentist.

The price of dental implants tends to vary considerably and depends on several factors including the level of skill of the surgeon, the type / quality / brand of implant used, the clinic where the treatment is

carried out, the level of aftercare service provided and obviously the amount of work required (i.e bone grafting) and number of implants required. In the UK the costs of a single tooth implant can vary from £800.00 up to £3000.00. In India, the cost is around INR 20000 (\$450, 320 euro or £250)

Are implants always successful?

Modern implant techniques have been in use since the 1950's. Improvements in procedures and materials have given implants a ten year average success rate of 93 percent or better. This enviable success rate is improving every year!

Can failed implants be replaced?

In the unlikely event an implant fails it can usually be replaced by another. In fact, most patients wouldn't have it any other way!

Is everyone a candidate for implant treatment?

In general, anyone healthy enough to undergo routine tooth extraction or oral surgery is probably able to receive an implant. There are some health conditions that warrant special consideration. Certain chronic diseases, heavy smoking or alcohol abuse may contraindicate implant treatment. After careful evaluation of your health history, your dentist will alert you to any conditions that may effect your treatment. Remember, age is not a factor.

Will others know I have dental implants?

Today's implant treatment enables you to have your new teeth look, feel and function like your own. Even though others will be unaware you have dental implants, many patients are so pleased they tell everyone they know. Dental implants offer some of the finest restorative results possible in modern dentistry.

How long does complete treatment take ?

Depending of the type of implant and replacement teeth selected, the total time can be as little as a few weeks to six or more months. If bone grafting is necessary, further time may be needed. Your dentist will discuss your options with you and advise you of the time requirements.

Will I need to be hospitalized?

Most implant procedures are performed in the dental office under local anesthesia. Hospitalization may be necessary for complex surgical procedures or general health reasons.

Is there pain or discomfort?

Many patients report implant surgery less troublesome than having teeth removed. With modern anesthesia and close attention to post operative care you can expect minimal discomfort.

Will I be without replacement teeth at any time?

Immediately following surgery you may be instructed not to wear replacement teeth in the surgical area. If required, this period is usually short, and temporary teeth are soon provided so you can quickly "get on" with your life.

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Steps in Implant placement



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