

DENTAL IMPLANTS

Dental implants are a popular option for replacing lost teeth. If you are missing a tooth, it should be replaced in order to restore your smile, regain your chewing ability and prevent other teeth from shifting. Your dentist may recommend replacing your lost tooth with a dental implant. They are an alternative to bridges, partials or dentures. Implants are comfortable, attractive and can look and feel like natural teeth. They will preserve the level of the bone and eliminate the negative results of tooth loss.

What is a Dental Implant?

A dental implant is an artificial tooth root inserted in the mouth usually involving a two-step procedure. First, a small titanium screw or surgical post is placed beneath the gum into the jawbone. This is always done under local anaesthesia in the dental office. Then a few months following the placement, an abutment or post which will hold the tooth in place is attached to the screw. Finally, a crown, or replacement tooth is attached to the abutment after all healing is complete. Implants can be used to replace a single tooth, support a bridge to replace several missing teeth, support a bridge when all the teeth are missing and provide secure fixation for a removable denture.

How long does the process take?

The procedure can take from four to eight months to complete; however, each patient heals differently so times will vary. Once the healing process is completed, it will take approximately 2 weeks to fit the implant with a replacement tooth.

What are implants made of?

Implants are made from metal called titanium. All implant materials are compatible with body tissue and are placed in the jawbone like natural roots. Titanium is not recognized by the body's immune system so it is not rejected as an implant. It integrates with the jawbone to give a firm support to the artificial replacement that it will support. There are different types, sizes and shapes of implants used according to the needs of the patient.

Reasons for Implants

- No worrying about dentures falling out- a stable foundation
- Improves biting pressure
- Insufficient teeth or jaw structure for other types of replacements
- Restores proper chewing ability which leads to a better diet and improved overall health
- Eliminates tooth shifting
- No loose dentures
- No gooey denture adhesives
- Improves speech
- Won't apply damaging pressure to your natural teeth because other teeth do not need to be clasped
- Comfort and fit
- Help preserve healthy vital tooth structure on adjacent teeth
- They look and feel like your natural teeth

- Increase your self-confidence when talking and smiling
- Maintain bone

How do I care for my implants?

It is important to brush and floss around the implant posts as you would with your natural teeth. Your dentist will give you specific instructions on how to care for your new implants. Special cleaning procedures will be necessary during your regular cleaning visits to ensure that you retain healthy gums.

Periodic inspection of the implant to bone connection must be done using x-rays. If properly cared for, your implants can last a lifetime. The better care you take of your implants, the more satisfied you will be with the results.

How do I know if I am a candidate for an implant?

You must be in good health and have the proper bone structure and healthy gums for the implant to stay in place. If you do not have enough bone, you may be able to have bone added to allow for implant placement. People who are unable to wear complete dentures may also be good candidates. If you suffer from chronic problems such as clenching or grinding or systemic diseases such as diabetes, the success rate for implants decreases. People who smoke or drink heavily may also not be good candidates. Your dentist and oral surgeon can evaluate your situation to determine if dental implants are the best option for you.

Risks Associated with Implants

Complications are rare with implant procedures. When infections or other complications occur, medication or surgical intervention may be used to treat it. Oral surgery may incur damaging of the nerve that controls sensation. Such complication is rare and may be temporary or permanent. In addition, there is the risk of bleeding, swelling, bruising, infections, discomfort, cosmetic problems and damage to other natural teeth. Each case is different and risks must be evaluated for each individual.

Implants and Dental Insurance

Typically implants are not covered by insurance providers. However, the investment of a healthy smile can be priceless. Discuss financial arrangements with your dental care provider.

If you have any further questions on dental implant choices, procedures, and care, please call our office at 905-508-2244.