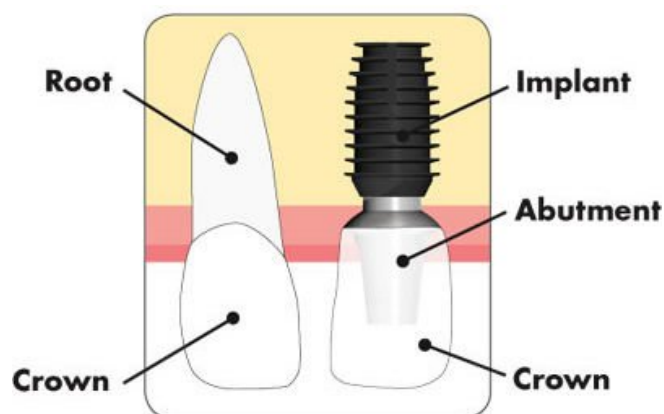


Dental Implants – your guide



During the last 30 years the use of dental implants has changed dentistry beyond recognition. Implants are no longer considered experimental and it is equally rare to come across situations where they cannot be used at all.

What is a dental implant?

A dental implant is essentially a substitute for a natural root and commonly it is screw or cylinder shaped.

In order to support replacement teeth, dental implants normally have some form of internal screw thread or post space that allows a variety of components (known as abutments) to be fitted. Once fitted, these components provide the foundation for long-term support of crowns, bridges or dentures.

How many teeth can be supported by implants?

All the common forms of tooth replacement, such as bridges or dentures can be replaced by dental implants.

If you are missing just one natural tooth, then one implant is normally all that will be needed to provide a replacement. Larger spaces created by two, three or more missing teeth do not necessarily need one implant per tooth; however the exact number of implants will depend upon the quality and volume of bone at each potential implant site.

Who is suitable for dental implants?

If you have good general health then dental implants will almost certainly work for you. However, habits such as heavy drinking or smoking can increase the number of problems associated with initial healing and thereafter may negatively influence the long-term health of gum and bone surrounding each implant. Remaining teeth might also be compromised making treatment planning less certain.

Do you need to have a healthy mouth?

When you first enquire about dental implants it is often in response to an awareness of ongoing dental problems or the recent loss of teeth. Each of these problems will need to be diagnosed and treated in a logical manner, often placing implants in order to establish healthier conditions.

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**Making your teeth look good makes you feel confident.
And that's all part of being healthy.**

Dental Implants – continue



Although it is tempting to focus on the more glamorous aspects of teeth supported by implants, basic dental health, which includes the treatment of gum disease, repair of decay and the elimination of abscesses will be just as important for the long-term success of your treatment.

If you are aware of bad breath, loose teeth, or have noticed excessive bleeding, particularly when your teeth are cleaned professionally, you may have gum problems. Periodontal (gum) disease is a major cause of bone loss and with reduced bone volume, which could make dental implant treatment more complicated.

What can you do if an implant does not work?

If an implant does not achieve or cannot maintain a rigid fixation with the surrounding bone it will eventually become loose and no longer be able to support replacement teeth. Commonly the failing implant causes no discomfort and if there are enough remaining, it may not be necessary to replace it at all.

The vast majority of these failures occur within the first year after the placement of the dental implant. It is for this reason that we would guarantee to replace any failed implants within this period free of charge, provided you follow the prescribed hygiene and maintenance programme designed for you including visits to dental hygienist every 3 months

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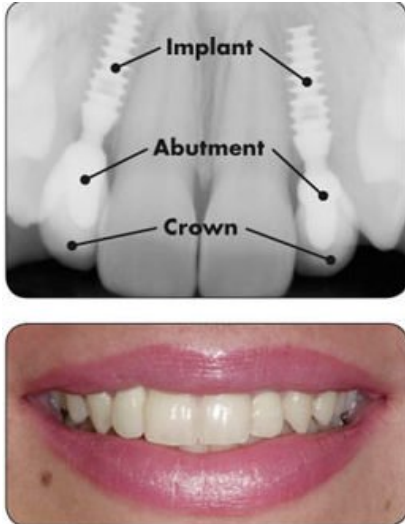
How long will the implants last?

Dental Implants are without doubt one of the most predictable means we have in replacing teeth in patients today. During the period after the new teeth are fitted, the success of each treatment stage will be the main factor determining how the implants are performing. Once the implants and surrounding soft tissues are seen to be healthy and the new teeth comfortable and correctly adjusted, it is the quality of your home care and willingness to present for regular maintenance reviews that will have most influence on how long they will last.



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Dental Implants – continue



How do I look after the implants?

For most implant-supported teeth you will be able to clean around each supporting implant by brushing and flossing in just the same way that you would around natural teeth and tooth-supported bridges. In some areas special floss, interdental toothbrushes and other cleaning aids may be needed to maintain good oral hygiene. Cleaning is not at all difficult, provided that you do not have impaired use of your hands.

It is reasonable to expect some of the daily hygiene procedures to be a little more complex than around your original teeth - equally expect to spend more time than you may have done in the past if you wish to maintain optimum implant health.

For the first few months the implants are in function we may ask that you are seen more frequently, however once we are satisfied your treatment is performing as planned, ongoing care will be similar to any patient with natural teeth.

What should you know before you start treatment?

You will be given a written summary of your treatment planning discussion(s), highlighting your current dental situation and any alternatives there are to dental implants. This summary will also include an over- view of the anticipated treatment stages and give you some idea of how long treatment is likely to take, how many implants are required and what the fees are expected to be. There may well be other issues specific to your case and these would be dealt with accordingly.

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Is it uncomfortable when the implants are placed?

Most patients will be very familiar with the dental anaesthetics used for routine dentistry and will know how effective they are. Implants are placed using the same anaesthesia. Depending upon the complexity of your case, the operation might take anything from 30 minutes for a single implant, to several hours for complex bone grafting and multiple implant placements.

For most patients, any of the simple painkillers you might take for a headache will be all that is needed for a few days.

Healing is generally uneventful and any stitches are removed a week to ten days later. You may also be asked to take a course of antibiotics and to follow some simple procedures such as rinsing with salt water or an antiseptic mouthrinse. It is important that you carry out these instructions.

The information in this leaflet is intended to provide an overview of routine dental implant treatment. Treatment plans involving dental implants are unique for each individual and accordingly the timing, cost and delivery of care will be customised to suit.

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