

What's The Deal With Dental Implants?



Whether missing one tooth or all their teeth, more and more people are replacing the loss with dental implants. Having a more natural feel than traditional bridges or dentures, most implant procedures involve placing metal anchors into the bone of the jaw, allowing the anchor and bone to fuse, placing an extension or abutment in the anchor, and fixing a prosthetic tooth, or crown, on the extension. After undergoing this multi-step process, many patients find they have a better feeling, better looking, and more stable solution to their tooth loss than more traditional dental reconstructive approaches.

What are the most common benefits of this surgery?

Replacing a lost tooth is vital to maintaining the overall health and function of the surrounding teeth. It helps avoid tooth migration and loss of structure. It is necessary to avoid loss of bone from the jaw in that area. Implants are an effective means of counteracting these problems. Implants are also very strong and provide a feel as close to a natural tooth as can be currently achieved. Further, implants reduce the impact of the lost tooth on surrounding teeth, as traditional bridge structures often require reduction (filing down) of the two adjacent teeth to hold the bridge in place with crowns. Implanting avoids such alterations to the surrounding teeth when replacing a lost tooth.

Implants, when replacing dentures, provide even more benefits. Dentures are notorious for slipping at the worst possible moments. Poorly fitting dentures can even affect diet, restricting food selections to easily chewed foods. Implants eliminate the possibility of slipping or pinching, and allow food of almost all types to be eaten (other than extremely hard foods such as chewing on ice, pits, or popcorn kernels, which is very bad for the implants and not good for natural teeth, either). In short, implants are the closest way to surgically restore a natural tooth to its original condition.

What will happen at the initial consultation?

At the first appointment, the dentist will examine your teeth and determine whether implants are the solution to your dental problems. Often, x-rays are necessary to discover the state of the jawbone, particularly if the teeth have been lost for some time. This information can be used to determine if implants would work for you and, if so, what particular type of implant that would be best for your situation.

What is the procedure?

The tooth structure has two main sections, the root and the crown. The root is the section of the tooth that is below the gumline. A dental implant acts as the restorative for this section of the tooth. The metal implant acts as an anchor in the jawbone. The first step of the procedure is surgical placement of the implant. Under regular dental anesthetic, the gum tissue is opened and the dentist places the implant into the jawbone. When this is achieved, the tissue is then sutured closed. There is not often significant discomfort with this procedure. This process can take from 1-3 hours depending on the number of implants being placed.

This implant will be left untreated for a period of 3-6 months. During this time, the bone will grow around the implant in a process called osseointegration. A removable crown may be utilized during this time period to allow for chewing and to preserve the cosmetic appearance..

The next step in the process is to attach an abutment to the tooth. This is achieved by exposing the top of the implant and placing the abutment. This is the part of the implant that will support the final crown.

Finally, an impression is taken of the implant and a final restoration is crafted. This restoration will be comfortable and cosmetically pleasing. Your completed implant will be fully functional, allowing you to resume normal activities.

How much pain is there?

Local anesthesia avoids the pain that would be involved in the surgical procedures during implantation and uncovering of the implant fixture. Most patients state that implants involve less pain and discomfort than a tooth extraction.

What can a patient expect after the procedure?

Following surgery, there will probably be bleeding, controlled by biting down on some gauze. Swelling may be controlled using an ice pack. Gums are generally sore after both surgeries for seven to ten days. You may be given antibiotics to take during the period immediately following the surgery.

What is the recovery period like?

Many people have very mild soreness, bleeding, or swelling, which can be treated with first aid and over the counter medicines and can return to work the day after surgery.

In between the first and second surgery, there is a recovery period of three to six months while the implants associate with the bone. This growth of the bones around the titanium posts may induce a few weeks of soreness. This discomfort can usually be controlled using over the counter medicine.

It is very important during your recovery to practice scrupulous oral hygiene. Poor care, resulting in chronic swelling of gum tissue, is a major contributor to implant failure. You may need to see your dentist about four times a year to keep track of the implant health.

What is the long-term outcome like for most people?

For most people, implants last between fifteen and twenty-five years. They may last significantly longer, but implantation is a new procedure and data has not been gathered. Between about 5 and about 10% of implants fail, but they often can be replaced with another implant attempt.

Call Us Today to find out if you're a candidate for dental implants!

Healthy Tips



Water Works for Weight Loss

Nothing quells the appetite like water, lots and lots of water. Start out with two quart bottles in the morning and carry one with you to work or wherever you go. If you like, divvy up the 64 ounces of water into eight (8-ounce) bottles or four pint (16-ounce) bottles to carry around with you all day. Freeze half of them the night before and they will last all day, even in a hot car. Keep some unfrozen so they will be ready to drink immediately.

Yes. You will have to make more frequent bathroom trips, but it is worth it. Drink your 64 ounces of water before dinner, if possible, so you're not up half the night going to the bathroom.

Water not only fills you up and lessens your appetite, it prevents those "hungry horrors" we all encounter when our blood sugar drops and we reach for cookies, candy, ice cream, fries or other high-calorie treats. Water also flushes out the system, rids the body of bloat and toxins and rosies up the complexion. Now, start splashing.