
Dental Implants

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For individuals who wish to replace missing teeth, dental implants may be an effective long-term solution. Implants provide greater structural support and last longer than either bridges or dentures. More and more people are also looking at dental implants as a replacement for dentures because with implants people are more confident and comfortable appearing in public and dining out. It has a big impact on the quality of life. It enables you to eat foods that you would have been unable to eat with conventional dentures.

Implants serve as the artificial root to which new teeth are bonded. They are typically constructed of titanium, a strong and safe material that effectively attaches to bone. The procedures to insert dental implants typically involve three steps: the implant insertion stage, osseointegration (the period of healing for the jawbone), and the attachment of the restoration or new tooth.

Before placing an Implant

Certain people are not good candidates for implants due to poor health conditions. You will have to undergo an evaluation to determine if you are a good candidate and to create a treatment plan.

Before a dental implant is placed, it is sometimes necessary to build up the bone in the area to increase the chance of success. This is a common procedure called bone grafting or augmentation. If such a procedure is necessary, your dental specialist may decide to complete the bone-augmentation procedure first and give the bone time to heal before placing the implants. However, you can wear your dentures or bridge during this time, so you won't be without teeth.

Types of Implants and the procedure

The most common implants used today are the root form, which resemble either a cylinder or screw. These implants are made from high-purity titanium alloy. Titanium is biologically accepted by the human body and the human body does not recognize it as a foreign body. So, the titanium will not elicit an immune response from the body. Implants are used to replace the root of a missing tooth or the roots of missing teeth. After the healing process is complete, restorations such as caps or dentures can be attached to these implants.

Once the dentist applies the local anesthesia, he or she makes an incision in the gum in order to gain access to the jawbone. The bone is then prepared and the implant inserted into the jawbone with care and precision. Finally, the dentist stitches the gums and, if necessary, prescribes the appropriate medication. During the

osseointegration step, which lasts anywhere from 3 to 8 months, the jawbone firmly attaches itself to the implant. Once osseointegration is completed, the patient returns to the dental office where the implant is fitted with the new tooth.

Another form of implant is the Plate Form Implant which is ideal in situations where the jawbone is not wide enough to properly support a Root Implant.

The last type of implant is the Subperiosteal Implant. These implants are utilized when the jawbone has receded to the point where it no longer supports a permanent implant. These implants are placed on top of the bone and imbedded in the gums, but not in the jawbone as with the other types of implants.

Health Concerns

As with any routine surgery, complications are rare, but can include infection, slight damage to nerves, and mild discomfort. Although very unlikely, infection of the gums or jawbone is a possibility and is treated through medication and/or antibiotics.

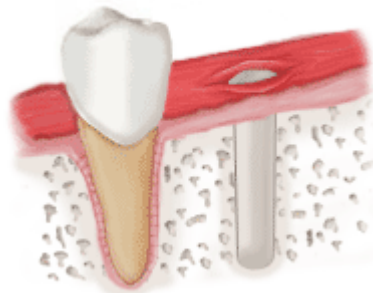
If you have more questions regarding dental implants and wish to have a complimentary consultation, please feel free to call our office at 510-796-1656 or write us at hp_dds@yahoo.com and we'll be glad to assist you.

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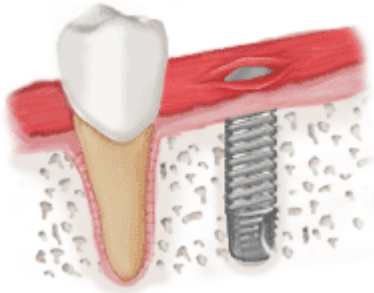
Illustrations: Placing An Implant



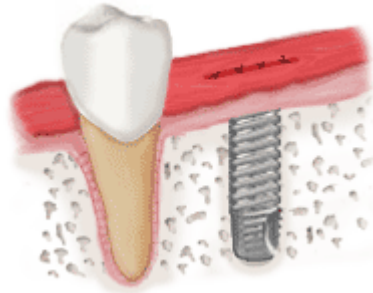
1. An incision is made in the gum where the implant will be placed.



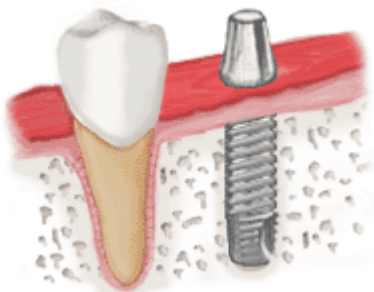
2. A hole is drilled in the bone.



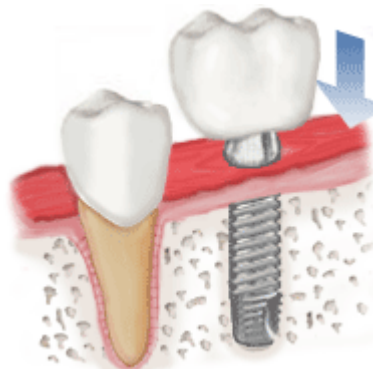
3. The implant, is placed into the hole in the bone.



4. The incision is stitched closed.



5. After healing, a new incision is made over the implant and another component, called an abutment, is screwed on top. The abutment is used to support a crown.



6. The crown, which is made to look like a natural tooth, is cemented or screwed onto the abutment.