



DENTAL IMPLANTS

A Guide to Understanding Your
Treatment Options



What are Dental Implants?

Dental implants are artificial roots and teeth (usually titanium) that are surgically placed into the upper or lower jawbone.

Due to biocompatible properties of titanium, a dental implant fuses with the bone and becomes a good anchor for the replacement tooth. A dental implant can

be used for replacing single or multiple missing teeth. The teeth attached to implants are strong, stable, durable and natural looking – giving many patients the confidence to smile again.

Implant Surgery

Missing teeth can be an embarrassing and frustrating problem. Tooth loss also affects your health and wellness through disruption of speech and eating. As you lose teeth the chance increases that they will prematurely wear out, damage, or lose your remaining teeth. You may also experience headaches and/or jaw pain due to an unnatural or compromised bite, which is possible following loss of teeth. Fortunately, dental implants are a proven and reliable solution to restoring health, appearance, and function.

Single & Multiple Dental Implant Replacements

When you need to have single or multiple teeth replaced, an oral surgeon may recommend dental implants. Implants are time-tested and predictable solution to tooth loss. Replacing a missing tooth with an implant avoids cutting down neighboring teeth for a bridge and the inconvenience of wearing a removable device called a partial. Multiple implants are used when you need to replace a section of teeth. This can be restored with an implant-supported bridge, denture, or individual teeth. Implants are surgically placed in the jaws after teeth are extracted. Sometimes the implants are placed at the time of tooth removal, other times they are placed after the appropriate healing time. Once implants heal in the bone a custom bridge or single tooth is made for your individual needs. When healthy teeth are left undisturbed, you prolong the health and longevity of your remaining teeth. Implants also slow the natural loss of jaw bone that occurs when bridges or partials are used to replace missing teeth.

Bone Grafting

When the bone that holds your teeth is damaged or small in size you may require bone grafting to help restore your jaw for replacement teeth. Using your teeth puts stress on your jaw bone, and dental implants and natural teeth need strong bone to withstand these forces. If there is lack of bone support around a tooth or implant failure is inevitable. Bone grafts help to create firm foundations for dental implants, protecting your time and investment in your teeth. There are several different bone grafting materials your oral surgeon may prescribe, including bone taken from your other body sites. Bone grafting may be required before, or at the same time of implant placement. Socket preservation is needed to preserve healthy jaw bone after tooth extraction if implants are your goal.

Full Arch Replacement

With dental implants, individuals who have lost large sections or all of their teeth can have their smiles restored. When all of the upper or lower teeth in an arch need to be replaced you may be offered a removable denture or

non-removable bridge. Dental implants provide increased stability under dentures by snapping into the denture. Patients wanting a more immovable option may choose implants to support a bridge. A full arch replacement is an attractive solution to helping restore the loss of many teeth and renew your oral health. You can eat and function like you did with natural teeth, revive your confidence and food options, and prevent future jawbone loss that causes facial aging.

Typical treatment will require several visits to ensure you have a chance to express your needs and desires and learn from your surgeon what option best fits your situation. The treatment plan and number of visits are personalized to your needs but generally follows a common course seen below. You and your surgeon decide how to proceed in a timely manner to achieve your goals.

Placing the Implants

After consultation and treatment planning any teeth that require extraction are removed. Implants may be replaced immediately or after the bone or required grafting has healed. The implants are then placed in the appropriate sites. Most of the time 4-6 implants are placed to restore a full-arch of teeth. Temporary teeth may be worn during the healing phase to eat and smile until the time the permanent denture or bridge is available.

Fitting the Denture

After the appropriate healing of your gums, bone, and implants, the final prosthesis is made to fit onto the implants. This process typically takes 2-3 visits. The new teeth mimic your natural teeth in appearance and feel and need proper maintenance for preservation. Patients who have had dentures before typically describe the improvement with full-arch replacement as a drastic improvement in appearance and feel compared to their conventional dentures describe the improvement with full arch replacement as a drastically better look and feel than their dentures.



RENEE ARBIT, RDA
Implant Treatment Coordinator

My role as Implant Treatment Coordinator is enriched by the collegiate education I completed to become a Registered Dental Assistant. I received RDA from the Tennessee Technology School. Professionally, I grew from chairside assisting our Oral Surgeons in the office to accepting a position of Implant Treatment Coordinator. In this practice, I realized that I had found my niche: helping people restore and maintain their dental health. I love the challenge of helping to create the smile our patient's desire. This oral surgery and implant practice has been my professional home since 1989.

In 2010, I took on a new role as Implant Treatment Coordinator (ITC). While I have seen many changes since entering the dental field, restoring missing teeth with dental implants has been one of the most exciting. As ITC, I serve two groups: dentists who recommend and restore the implants we place, and patients who are fortunate enough to have their lives improved by them. Together with Drs. Hardison, Dr. Warden, Dr. Lewallen, dental laboratories, and representatives from manufacturers of different implant systems, I also provide educational programs on implants for dentists and their staffs.

What is a dental implant?

A dental implant is a small titanium screw that is implanted into the upper or lower jaw to replace the root and serve as an anchor for a replacement tooth. Because titanium has biocompatible properties, titanium implants fuse with a patient's bone enabling it to offer solid and reliable support.

Why dental implants?

When a tooth's root structure decays, a more solid anchor for replacement teeth is needed. The jawbone can also shrink during the natural aging process, aesthetically changing a patient's facial structure. A dental implant is stable and can offer a lifetime of solid support.

Are dental implants successful?

In a recent study, 95% of dental implants were reported as successful over a 5 year period of observance.

How much do dental implants cost?

The total cost of dental implants will depend on the number of teeth being replaced and the number of implants needed to support them. Our team will be able to give an estimate of total cost after a consultation has been performed at our office.

Who is a Candidate?

Candidates include patients dealing with damage to teeth due to tooth decay, injury, or disease.

Is old age a problem?

Old age is not a direct factor in the effectiveness of a dental implant. However, certain medical conditions or medical history may affect the success of the surgery. Our doctors will be able to advise patients on a case-by-case basis to assess any factors that could influence surgical outcomes.

What are the advantages of dental implants over dentures or a dental bridge?

Advantages of dental implants over a dental bridge include improved appearance, preservation of other natural teeth, permanence, and overall natural look and feel.

Will my new teeth look natural?

When dental implants are used, comfort, appearance and function are, for most patients, virtually identical to natural teeth.

Will I be able to chew with the same force and pressure I use with my natural teeth?

After a brief adaptation period, chewing will feel virtually the same as using your own natural teeth.

How much time is required for a dental implant placement?

The number of procedures needed to complete the dental implant procedure can depend on a number of factors. Occasionally, we can complete the entire procedure in one session, but on average, a period of 3 – 6 months is needed to allow the site to heal and fully fuse with the jawbone. Once proper healing has taken place, the permanent crown can be placed.

FAQ's

Is the treatment painful?

Every surgery can involve some level of discomfort, but placing one implant normally causes less discomfort than placing several. Adequate amounts of anesthesia and/or other types of sedation are commonly used to minimize any discomfort during the procedure.

How will I feel after the treatment?

Some bruising or swelling in the gum is normal, but this usually subsides with the use of ordinary painkillers. Most patients return to work the next day.

How will I care for my dental implants?

Brushing and flossing should be done as often as your dentist or oral surgeon recommends. A follow-up examination may be scheduled 6 months after the procedure to ensure healing has completed.

