



#### After-care

As you know, your own teeth require conscientious at-home oral care and regular dental visits. Dental implants are like your own teeth and will require the same care. In order to keep your implant clean and plaque-free, brushing and flossing still apply!

After treatment, your periodontist will work closely with you and your dentist to develop the best care plan for you. Periodic follow-up visits and professional scale and cleans will be scheduled to monitor your implant, teeth and gums to make sure they are healthy.

## Implants



Creating Smiles with Care



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## What are implants?

A dental implant can be thought of as an artificial tooth root that is submerged into the jawbone. When dental work such as a crown, fixed bridge or a full set of dentures is added, one or more missing teeth can be replaced. A dental implant is fabricated from a very strong, biocompatible material placed in a simple procedure that, generally, is as convenient as a tooth extraction. After an initial healing period, during which the implant is buried in bone and left undisturbed under gum tissue, it is uncovered and connected to a small metal post that secures and supports the artificial tooth.

The implant material is extremely biocompatible. The bone grows to the implant and bonds to it. This makes the implant very strong. The process is called 'osseointegration'



## How Successful Are Dental Implants?

The success rate depends on where in the jaw the implants are placed. The lower jaw has a very good chance of success (98%). The further back in the mouth you go, the lesser the prognosis, but this is generally over 90%. With proper care, implants can last a lifetime. If you smoke, the chances of success drop by at least 10%.

## Why would I get an Implant?

When you have lost, or are about to lose a tooth it is advantageous to your whole mouth to fill the space. You can do this with a removable appliance such as a partial denture or you can decide to have an implant. Advantages to having an implant placed are:

- **Improved appearance.** Dental implants look and feel like your own teeth. And because they are designed to fuse with bone, they become permanent.
  - **Improved speech.** With poor-fitting dentures, the teeth can slip within the mouth causing you to mumble or slur your words. Dental implants allow you to speak without the worry that teeth might slip.
  - **Improved comfort.** Because they become part of you, implants eliminate the discomfort of removable dentures.
  - **Easier eating.** Sliding dentures can make chewing difficult. Dental implants function like your own teeth, allowing you to eat your favorite foods with confidence and without pain.
  - **Improved self-esteem.** Dental implants can give you back your smile and help you feel better about yourself.
  - **Improved oral health.** Dental implants don't require reducing other teeth, as a tooth-supported bridge does. Because nearby teeth are not altered to support the implant, more of your own teeth are left intact, improving long-term oral health. Individual implants also allow easier access between teeth, improving oral hygiene.
  - **Durability.** Implants are very durable and will last many years. With good care, many implants last a lifetime.
- Convenience.** Removable dentures are just that; removable. Dental implants eliminate the embarrassing inconvenience of removing dentures, as well as the need for messy adhesives to keep them in place.

## Can Anyone Get Dental Implants?

In most cases, anyone healthy enough to undergo a routine dental extraction or oral surgery can be considered for a dental implant. Patients should have healthy gums and enough bone to hold the implant. They also must be committed to good oral hygiene and regular dental visits. Heavy smokers, people suffering from uncontrolled chronic disorders, such as diabetes or heart disease, patients who have had radiation therapy to the head/neck area need to be evaluated on an individual basis. If you are considering implants, talk to your dentist to see if they are right for you.

## What does the process involve?

This procedure is a team effort between you, your dentist and your periodontist. Your periodontist and dentist will consult with you to determine where and how your implant should be placed. Depending on your specific condition and the type of implant chosen, your periodontist will create a treatment plan tailored to meet your needs.

**Replacing a Single Tooth** If you are missing a single tooth, one implant and a crown can replace it.

**Replacing Several Teeth** If you are missing several teeth, implant-supported bridges can replace them.

**Replacing All of Your Teeth** If you are missing all of your teeth, an implant-supported full bridge or full denture can replace them.

