



# **DENTAL IMPLANTS**



*Consider the implant alternative*

## WHAT IS A DENTAL IMPLANT?

A dental implant is typically a small screw shaped attachment usually made from titanium. It is inserted within the jawbone to take the place of a missing tooth root. Once **osseointegration** (*when the bone attaches firmly to the implant*) has occurred, a replacement tooth can be secured to the top of the implant. This new tooth can look, feel and perform just like a natural tooth. It is also possible to use multiple implants to support a denture or bridge.



## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF IMPLANTS?

- Implant secured or stabilised replacement teeth are more comfortable than conventional dentures because there is no slipping or movement. This eliminates some of the key worries of dentures and improves self confidence.
- Dental implants are the alternative to bridgework for permanently replacing missing teeth, eliminating the need to grind down healthy teeth.
- When teeth are missing the surrounding bone begins to shrink. Dental implants can help maintain the shape and structure of the jaw bone.

## ASSESSMENT & PLANNING

X-RAYS & MODELS

**IS THERE BONE LOSS?**

**YES**

POSSIBLE  
BONE REPAIR  
OR GRAFT

**NO**

## IMPLANT PLACEMENT

### INTEGRATION PERIOD

*(when the bone attaches firmly to the implant)*

### RESTORATION

CROWN

BRIDGE

OVERDENTURE

### MAINTENANCE & REVIEW

MONITOR HEALTH & HYGIENE

To find out more  
about dental implants,  
just request a consultation  
with your dentist

## WHAT IS INVOLVED IN THE IMPLANT PROCESS?

The implant process normally involves several steps that take place over a period of time from three to nine months. Although there are various implant treatment methods, a typical process often includes:

**Assessment planning** - At initial consultation, after discussing possible alternatives, the dental surgeon will assess the feasibility of providing implant treatment. X-rays may be taken and preliminary models may be prepared. A written plan is usually then formulated detailing the sequence of treatment and associated cost.

**Implant placement** - A relatively simple minor surgical procedure that can be performed under sterile conditions in a dental surgery under local anaesthesia and, if indicated, supplemented by conscious sedation. If after assessment the underlying bone is judged to be deficient, a number of options are available for bone regeneration. This may be carried out prior to, or at the same time as, the implant placement.

**Integration period** - Although some implants can be loaded into function immediately or soon after surgery, it is often suggested that a period of three months or more be allowed for the implant to fully integrate before loading. The patient's own denture or in some cases a simple adhesive bridge, can be worn during this healing phase.

**The restorative phase** - Once integrated, the implants may need to be uncovered and can be brought into function with a variety of restorations, ranging from a single crown, small or large bridge, or if preferred, a removable overdenture clipped to the implants. The replacement teeth are constructed by a specialist dental laboratory working closely with the dental surgeon.

**Maintenance** - Following the completion of implant treatment, patients need to clean thoroughly around the implants as instructed by the dentist. They should attend their dentist for regular review so that the health of the soft tissue, bone levels and the integrity of the restoration can be checked.

## YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

### Will I be able to eat what I like afterwards?

Once completed, patients should be able to eat a normal, healthy diet with little or no difficulty.

### What costs are involved in implant treatment?

The cost can vary, depending on the degree and extent of treatment needed. The full cost is therefore explained and subsequently confirmed in a written treatment plan.

### How long will it all take?

A range of techniques is available. Usually implant treatment requires a number of appointments over a period of several months. In some cases, implant work can be undertaken and completed in a much shorter period.

### How long will the implants last?

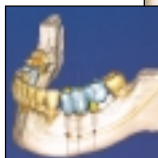
Once treatment is completed, a routine of careful dental hygiene and regular check-ups should ensure that implants last for many years.

### Am I too old for implant treatment?

There is no upper age limit for patients to undergo implant treatment, provided they continue to enjoy reasonable good health.

### Is the treatment painful?

Patients are often surprised at how little discomfort they experience during and after implant procedures.





Further information is available direct from:

The Association of Dental Implantology UK

98 South Worple Way

London SW14 8ND

Tel: 020 8487 5555

Fax: 020 8487 5566

Email: [adi.uk@btinternet.com](mailto:adi.uk@btinternet.com)

[www.adi.org.uk](http://www.adi.org.uk)

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