YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

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Am I too old for implant treatment?
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Is the treatment painful?
Patients are often surprised at how little discomfort they experience during and after implant procedures.

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Tel: 020 8487 5555
Fax: 020 8487 5566
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www.adi.org.uk
Registered Charity No 800238
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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.

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.

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