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- All about implants

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● All about implants

What are implants?

Implants are an alternative to dentures and bridges, but they are more expensive. Implants are titanium rods which are surgically placed into the jawbone and act as anchors for fastening dentures or crowns onto.

Why have implants?

Tooth loss can occur for many reasons including tooth decay, gum disease and accidents. Just one or two missing teeth can dramatically affect your appearance, your self-confidence, as well as the food you choose to eat.

The speedy replacement of a lost tooth will slow down bone loss and help preserve other, healthy teeth, helping to maintain your smile and oral health.

Dental implant treatment can bring back quality of life, comfort and aesthetics. This has a positive impact on your self-confidence and overall mental health – with teeth that look, feel and function like your natural ones.

Are implants safe and how long will they last?

Implants are a safe, well-established, tried-and-tested treatment. It's probably true to say that implants, much like natural teeth, will last for as long as you care for them.

How well you look after your implants - and whether you go for your regular maintenance appointments - will have the biggest impact on how long they will last.

If you don't look after your implants they will develop a coating similar to that found on neglected natural teeth. Left untreated, this can lead to gum infection, bleeding, soreness and general discomfort. You could get all these problems with natural teeth.

If your implants are well looked after, and if the bone they are fitted to is strong and healthy, you can expect them to last for many years. However, just as with other surgical implants (such as a hip replacement) there is no lifetime guarantee.

What is the procedure for dental implants?

The first phase of your treatment will be implant placement. Local anaesthetic is applied and a titanium post is placed in the jaw bone, in the location of the missing tooth. This quick and relatively painless procedure lasts 1-2 hours. You may experience a small amount of discomfort following the placement of the implant but this will subside and healing will occur relatively quickly.

Biological Integration, or bone knitting, occurs when the bone heals around the implant. This usually takes 8-12 weeks. In a very small amount of cases this integration may take up to a year. The implant will provide a strong and stable platform for your new teeth.

● All about implants

Once your implant integrates with the bone, moulds are taken and the final 'teeth' are individually designed, made and cemented onto the implant. This may be your new crown, bridge or denture and will look, feel and function as natural teeth.

What are the advantages of dental implants?

Next best thing to healthy, natural teeth. Strong and stable, a dental implant restores a lost tooth so that it looks, feels, fits and functions like a natural tooth.

Built to last. With proper care implants can often last for more than 10 years, but at some point they may need to be replaced. While dental implants may need periodic adjustments, they can last a lifetime when properly placed and cared for over time.

Protect healthy bone. Leaving empty spaces in your mouth after losing one or more teeth can lead to additional health issues, such as the loss and deterioration of some of your jawbone. When it is not being used to support a natural tooth, the jawbone deteriorates, losing its strength and firmness. Dental implants are the only dental restoration option that preserves and stimulates natural bone, actually helping to stimulate bone growth and prevent bone loss.

Eat your favourite foods! Taste and enjoy the foods you love without hesitation. You can bite naturally, eat virtually anything you want and, unlike removable dentures that can feel uncomfortable, you can experience the full taste of the food you eat with dental implants, too.

Keep teeth in place – silently. Dentures may slip when you eat, talk, smile, laugh, kiss, yawn or cough, so that you have to "reposition" them back into place in the mouth. Dental implants are fixed in place and fuse naturally with your jawbone, meaning your replacement teeth won't move, click or shift.

Protect your healthy teeth. Placing a tooth-supported bridge requires grinding away the teeth on one or both sides of the missing tooth or teeth – thereby damaging healthy teeth to restore those that are missing. The modified healthy teeth are attached to, and support, the bridge. Dental implants go in the jawbone, in the spot where your missing tooth root was, without impacting healthy teeth. They also help prevent healthy, adjacent teeth from shifting as they would if an empty space were left for an extended period of time.

