



Dental Implants 101

How will they look and feel?

When dental implant surgery is carried out properly, and your dentist uses modern restorative care, implants will mimic the appearance, comfort, and chewing function of natural teeth. Implants are likely to exceed your expectations, and it will be hard to tell them apart from your natural teeth.

How long does it take to complete treatment?

In cases where all teeth need to be removed, we can usually place implants the same day. However, removing only one tooth at a time usually limits the ability to place the implant and the tooth crown the same day. If you are already missing teeth or have hopeless teeth that need to be removed, it is often possible to remove teeth, place the implants, and secure fixed provisional teeth all in one day. Once the implants are fully healed, a beautiful final prosthesis can be made to your exact desires for tooth size, color and position.

Most implant treatments take 4-6 months to complete. If a complex treatment plan requires significant jawbone reconstruction, it can take as long as 18 months. Your particular case may involve several surgical steps and accompanying healing intervals. Careful planning and wise treatment option choices are critical for your success. There is no benefit to rushing through treatment, as this will lead to a compromised end result. At your consultation, we will review your treatment options and outline the expected time frame to complete your treatment.

How long do implants last?

Implants usually last a long time, if cared for properly. Long term success rates of dental implants are about 95% and 98% in the upper and lower jaws, respectively. The earliest implant patients have had over 45 years of success.



Will I be without teeth during healing?

Going home with or without teeth will be your choice. By carefully planning with your dentist, we will be able to provide temporary teeth at all phases of your implant healing.

Am I a good candidate for dental implants?

Most patients are candidates for implants. Some treatments take longer than others, but most patients are able to benefit from dental implants in a short period of time. We have placed dental implants on patients from age 16, all the way to 96. While age is not necessarily a risk factor, the following conditions may decrease the overall success rate of dental implants: certain bone stabilizing medications, uncontrolled diabetes, heavy smoking, poor overall health, and active periodontal disease.

If teeth have been missing for many years, bone grafting may be required in order to obtain a predictable implant result. The several options for bone or tissue augmentation will be presented at your consultation. Most are very minimally-invasive and add little to your recuperation. If you have been told there is “not enough bone” to do implants, don’t believe it! With modern surgical techniques, we can grow more bone and help you become an excellent candidate.

How do I clean and maintain my implants?

As with natural teeth, you may clean implants with a toothbrush, floss, water pik, and other recommended aids. You should also visit your restoring dentist at least twice each year for hygiene and maintenance. We will address the important hygiene techniques during your consultation.

Does implant surgery hurt?

Contrary to common belief, dental implant procedures are quite painless. Due to the nature of the procedure, we need to make a small opening through the gum tissue, which may cause some discomfort. However, this pain is usually much less than what patients expect. Depending on the procedure, we may elect to prescribe medications to keep you comfortable after treatment.



What are the potential problems?

Complications are rare. An implant or bone graft can become infected and may need to be removed. But after the site heals, another implant can usually be reattempted successfully. A perfect esthetic result may be difficult to achieve, especially if the gum tissues have receded. Where needed, we do touch up surgery or grafting to improve the gums surrounding the implant.

The general risks of dental implant surgery are similar to those described for extraction of teeth. There is a chance of minor complications such as infection, sinus floor injury, nerve injury (resulting in numbness), or prolonged recuperation. Serious complications are extremely remote, and the potential is related to your general health. The particular risks of your planned procedure will be discussed at your consultation.

How much do dental implants cost?

Come see us for a consultation! Each case is so unique and insurance varies greatly, that we really cannot give you an accurate idea without getting to meet your first. You will know the costs before you commit, and there will be no surprises. For treatment that involves several stages, the total cost does not need to be paid up front.

Because dental implant treatment requires your general dentist to restore (place a tooth on) the implant, there is a SEPARATE FEE FROM YOUR DENTIST. Please be sure to obtain an accurate estimate from your regular dentist, in addition to our estimate. Though dental implants usually cost about ¼ more than a fixed bridge, they tend to be more cost-effective over the long term. Because of the high success rate (> 95%) for at least 5 years, many patients recognize their money will go further with dental implants. The other major benefit is that when they fail, they usually don't cause any problems with the adjacent teeth, unlike bridges. We offer financing options to assist with payments over time.



How will dental implants change my life?

Be prepared to smile and laugh again. Dental implant-supported replacement teeth look, feel and function like natural teeth. With few exceptions, you may eat and drink whatever you choose. People who have felt embarrassed and worried because of their tooth problems are often overwhelmed by what new permanent teeth can do for their self-esteem.

Does insurance cover dental implants?

Insurance coverage in general has become increasingly favorable for implants. We cannot tell you what will be covered by insurance until we have seen you in the office and discuss the treatment with your insurance company. We are happy to provide you with a complimentary benefits check of your insurance, and we can help you estimate what your cost will be out of pocket. In rare cases of tumors or major trauma, medical insurance may cover implant treatment.

How do I get started?

We are always welcoming new patients, with and without referrals. Just give us a call and we will be happy to meet with you to develop the best plan for you. Dental insurance will generally cover the cost of your consultation and maybe the needed CT scan.