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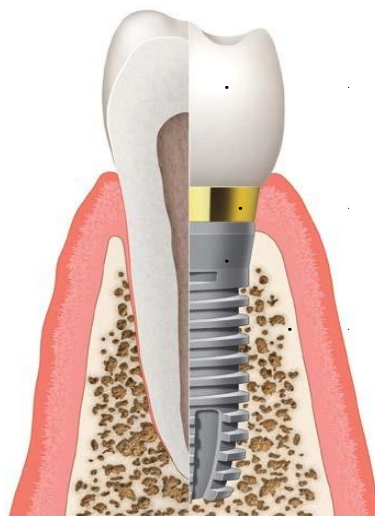
Dental Implant Information

In the last decade dental implants have become widely used in mainstream dentistry and are usually the treatment of choice for a missing tooth.

What is a dental implant?

A dental implant is an artificial replacement for a tooth root, usually made from titanium. There are many different implant systems available and when competently used they all deliver a highly reliable form of treatment. The main aim during the placement of any implant is to achieve immediate close contact with the surrounding bone. Over time further growth of bone onto the implant surface enhances the stability of the implant.

In order to support replacement teeth, dental implants normally have some form of internal screw thread or post space that allows a variety of components to be fitted. Once fitted, these components provide the foundation for long-term support of crowns, bridges or dentures.



Who is suitable for dental implants?

Dental implants are suitable for most adults with good general health. They can only be used once the jawbone has stopped growing and so generally are not used with younger patients. Habits such as heavy drinking or smoking can increase the number of problems associated with initial healing and thereafter may be bad for the long-term health of gum and bone surrounding each implant. Some dentists will decline to place implants if smoking cannot be reduced or given up .

However, each case is different and if you do have any medical problems then speak to your doctor or dentist prior to starting any treatment – it is only in some circumstances that health problems prevent the use of dental implants.

An overview of the implant process

Implant treatment normally involves several stages 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 and treatment planning:**

At initial consultation, following full discussion of all possible alternatives, the dentist will assess the feasibility of providing implant treatment. X-rays will be taken, and models of the teeth prepared. A written treatment plan will then be formulated detailing the sequence of treatment and associated costs.

- **Implant placement:**

Implant placement is a relatively simple minor surgical procedure that can be performed under sterile conditions in a dental surgery. The treatment is performed under local anaesthesia with sedation if required. If, during assessment, the underlying bone is deemed deficient, a number of options are available for bone regeneration. Bone regeneration is carried out prior to or at the same time as implant placement depending on requirements.

- **Integration period:**

Implants can take from six weeks to six months to fuse with the patient's bone. During this integration period, temporary dentures or bridgework can be worn as appropriate. In some cases, temporary teeth can be fixed to the implants while they integrate in a process known as 'immediate loading'.

- **The restorative phase:**

Once integrated, the implants can be brought into function with a variety of new teeth options (definitive restorations) ranging from a single crown, small or large bridge or a

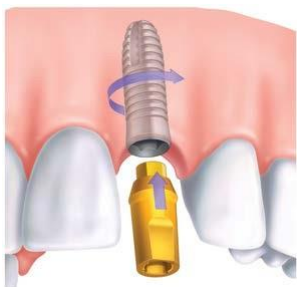
removable overdenture. A dental technician who works closely with the dental surgeon constructs these definitive restorations.

- **Maintenance:**

Following completion of implant treatment, the patient must regularly and thoroughly clean the new teeth (restorations) as instructed by their dentist. A dental hygienist may also advise on care and maintenance of the restorations and natural teeth. Regular visits to your dentist are essential so that the health of the soft tissue, bone levels and the integrity of the restoration can be reviewed.



Missing Tooth

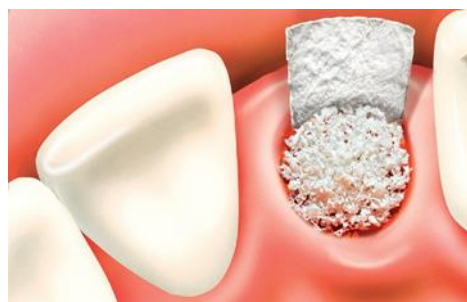


Implant and Abutment



Crown cemented or screwed over the Implant

Bone and Soft Tissue Grafting



In some patients there is not enough bone in their jaw to allow dental implants to be inserted and a bone graft is needed to increase the amount of bone available(image above).

What happens during bone grafting?

When a small amount of bone is needed, we can transfer bone from one part of the jaw to the other or use synthetic bone. The bone graft is normally taken from the back of the jaw or from the chin area. This can be done under local anaesthesia (an injection which makes the area where we are working numb) and with or without sedation (to relax you).

- The gum is lifted away from the underlying bone where the graft is to be placed and the amount of bone needed is assessed.
- The bone is then taken from another part of your jaw after lifting the overlying gum and carefully drilling into the bone.
- The dentist will place the bone to be grafted onto the recipient site.
- The graft may be fixed in position with small pins or screws that can be removed when the implants are placed. In some cases, the graft must be protected with a membrane.
- The gum is replaced and stitched carefully back into place.
- The surgery usually takes about 60-90 minutes.
- The stitches are removed about a week later.

Once the graft has been confirmed as successful, and the site of the bone graft is totally healed, the next stage of the dental implant process can begin. This usually takes 3-6 months after the bone graft.

Alternatives to your own bone for grafting

For those who would prefer an easier but slightly slower, solution there are other sources of bone such as bovine (derived from cow), porcine (derived from pig) or synthetic materials that have been specially prepared to make them safe for use in humans. All of these materials, including your own bone, simply provide a scaffold into which new bone will grow in order to be ready to receive dental implants a few months later.

New bone can take anything from 3 to 12 months before it is ready to receive dental implants. Do not be in a hurry to move to the next stage. If you need a large volume of bone it will take longer to mature than a small amount. On some occasions your bone graft may also be mixed with a synthetic material or bone from another source i.e animal derived products. In some cases, a synthetic membrane may also be used to cover and protect the graft. We will inform you of any proposed synthetic graft or membrane, the composition of the graft/membrane and the origin of the graft/membrane (make/type). The choice of material can be discussed.

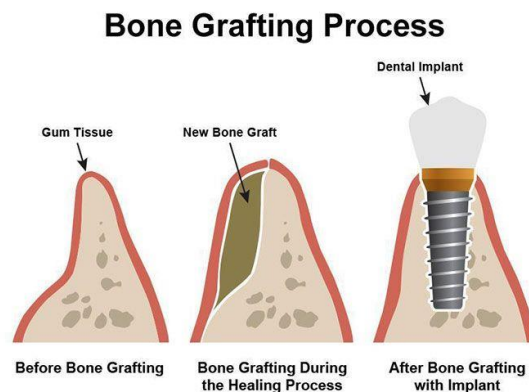
Each surgeon will have his or her preferred way of creating new bone. Many of them will also use a supplementary technique called 'guided tissue regeneration'. Using this technique, slow-moving bone cells are given time to fill a space by placing a barrier material between them and the fast-moving cells of the soft tissues lining the mouth. This is a 'resorbable barrier' that will disappear naturally a few months after it has done its work.

What are the benefits – why should I have a bone graft and dental implants?

Dental implants can be very useful where we would otherwise have to crown (cap) healthy teeth or where a denture or bridge would be difficult or sometimes impossible because there are no suitable teeth or gums for support.

If there is not enough bone in your jaw, bone grafts may be required to insert enough implants to support dentures, crowns (caps) or bridges.

Bone grafts may also be needed to improve the bone and gum at a proposed implant site so that it looks better. Rebuilding a site to its dimensions before tooth loss can be difficult and a compromise end result may have to be accepted.



What are the risks?

- Pain, swelling and bruising in the area where the graft (bone) has been taken from.
- Swelling in the jaw at the site of the graft which normally lasts for about one to two weeks.
- Infection and/or failure of the graft. We try to avoid this by using careful techniques and antibiotics.
- Insufficient successful graft bone to accept implants. In these cases further grafting may be necessary.
- The risk of failure is higher in certain individuals, particularly those who smoke, and you will be advised if we think risk of failure is higher than normal in your case.
- There is a higher risk of failure in implants placed into grafted bone rather than natural bone.

How can I prepare?

Please make sure you have told us about any problems with your health and about any tablets or medicines you are taking. Some medical conditions change the advice and information we need to give you.

If you are a smoker, we strongly advise you to quit and remain a non-smoker in the long term. This will significantly reduce the risk of some implant or graft complications.

Giving my consent (permission)

We want to involve you in decisions about your care and treatment. If you decide to go ahead, you will be asked to sign a consent form. This states that you agree to have the treatment and you understand what it involves. If you would like more information about our consent process, please speak to a member of our staff or your dentist.

Will I feel any pain?

The level of discomfort is variable and generally only requires painkillers, such as paracetamol

or ibuprofen, which are available from your local pharmacy. It is better to take these before the local anaesthesia wears off, at the interval prescribed on the packet, for the first 24 hours. It is possible that some facial swelling and bruising may occur. In order to minimise this, apply ice packs to the area for ten minutes per hour, for the first six hours. A simple ice pack can be made by wrapping a small bag of frozen vegetables in a clean cloth.

What happens after the procedure?

If you have had the procedure under local anaesthesia you will be able to leave your dental clinic as soon as the procedure has been completed. You will be given a course of antibiotics to take home and use over the following week. In most cases, the graft will be left to heal for a period of three to six months before surgery is carried out to insert the dental implants.

What do I need to do after I go home?

You should be able to return to work within a day or two of your treatment. Occasionally you may not be able to wear your dentures -if you are wearing ones-for up to two weeks after the surgery. You should avoid alcohol for 24 hours. If you are a smoker, we strongly advise you to quit and remain a non-smoker in the long term.

It is not advisable to brush the area where your graft was taken from or inserted into for the first week after surgery. A mouthwash containing chlorhexidine (for example Corsodyl) is recommended to keep the area free of plaque. The mouthwash should be held in the mouth for one minute and this should be repeated twice daily. Please read and follow the instructions on the label.

What should I do if I have a problem at home?

If any bleeding is experienced, roll up a sterilised gauze (we will provide some) press it over the wound and hold it there by closing your jaws firmly together for at least half an hour. If the bleeding does not stop you will need to contact **Paddington Dentistry** immediately to **02 93606245**.

Will I have a follow-up appointment?

You will need a follow up appointment to check that the bone graft has worked and to plan the next stage of your implant treatment. This appointment will be given to you before you leave our practice. Any dental restorations or dentures based on implants will need regular follow up and occasional maintenance. We will expect you to be willing to attend for such care, and for regular checks of the implants themselves.

Frequently Asked Questions

Will I be able to eat what I like afterward?

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

What costs are involved in implant treatments?

The cost can vary, depending on the degree and extent of treatment required. The full cost is therefore explained and confirmed in a written treatment plan from your implant dentist.

How long will it take?

Implant treatment usually requires a number of appointments over a period of months. In some cases, however, implant work can be completed in a much shorter period.

How long will it last?

Once treatment is completed, a regular routine of 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 reasonably good health.

Is the treatment painful?

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