

## What are the advantages of dental implants?

- ◆ **Dental implants function like natural teeth.**
- ◆ **The purpose of your jawbone is to support your teeth and facial contours.**  
When a tooth is missing for a period of time the bone begins to diminish. The remaining teeth can shift harming your bite. If all lower teeth are lost, the lower one-third of the face collapses and the jaw can become dangerously weakened. Unlike any other replacement option (bridges or dentures), dental implants maintain bone in the areas they are placed. This diminishes bone loss and weakening of the jaw.
- ◆ **Dental implants never need root canals or fillings.**
- ◆ **Dental implants last longer than any other replacement option available.**
- ◆ **Adjacent teeth are not compromised to replace missing teeth.**  
A bridge requires the irreversible modification of healthy teeth on either side of the missing tooth. Studies show that the typical tooth supported bridge lasts from 7-10 years and that over time the modified teeth may be lost.

## Do implants ever fail?

Dental implants are one of the most successful procedures in dentistry. Dental implants have a world wide success rate of over 95%. **However, Fairfax Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery has exceeded the world wide average achieving a success rate of 98%.**

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## Dental Implants

*Frequently Asked Questions*



## A Patient's Guide to Understanding Treatment

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## What are dental implants?

An implant is a small titanium device that is inserted into the jawbone to replace the root of a missing tooth. During the healing process, bone grows around the implant fusing it to the jawbone. Once healing is complete, the implant provides a solid foundation for a new crown. Your dentist will instruct the dental laboratory to make your crown and will then attach it to your implant.



## Who is a candidate for dental implants?

With the exception of growing children, dental implants are a solution for people of all ages.

- ◆ Implant tooth replacement in children is not recommended until jaw growth is complete.
- ◆ Bone loss is a factor in qualifying patients for dental implants. If there is not enough bone to support the implant, there are procedures available to create new bone.
- ◆ Smoking and medical conditions such as uncontrolled diabetes can hinder the success of implants.

X-rays and a thorough examination will determine if implants can be placed or if other procedures will be necessary before implant placement.

## What do I do if I have lost all of my teeth?

Typically 2-6 implants are placed in the jaw. Your dentist and surgeon will determine with you if your implants should support fixed teeth or be used to stabilize removable teeth.



## How long do implants last?

Dental implants are designed to be permanent but many factors contribute to long term success. The success rate is influenced by several factors including regular visits to your dentist.

## What are the steps in placing dental implants?

- ◆ **Consultation** - Meeting with your dentist and/or specialist will determine if you are a candidate for implants. This frequently includes taking x-rays and making models of your teeth to determine the ideal placement of the implant and crown.
- ◆ **Implant Placement** - The surgeon will make an incision in the gums and place the implant into the jawbone. A healing abutment is attached to the top of the implant to guide the gums into an esthetically pleasing shape.

## Will I have to be without teeth?

**No.**

Your dentist can make a temporary replacement so that you will never have to be without a tooth. The healing time varies from 2-6 months depending on the quality of the bone. Once the surgeon has checked the stability of the implant, your dentist and/or specialist will take an impression and select a shade for the crown that will match your other teeth. Your dentist and/or specialist will then attach the crown to the implant.

## What if I am missing more than one tooth?

There are many types of implant restorations. Your dentist and/or specialist and surgeon will determine a solution for your individual needs.

- ◆ **Individual tooth replacement** - In this situation, the missing tooth or teeth are replaced by single implants and individual crowns.
- ◆ **Multiple tooth replacement** - It is not always necessary to replace each missing tooth with an implant. A multiple tooth bridge can usually be attached to fewer implants.

