

## Dental Implants

### What are dental implants?

A dental implant is a piece of titanium or other material that looks like a screw. It is put into the jaw where the missing tooth's roots were, to serve as the root of the missing tooth. Bone will grow around the implanted screw which will help to hold it in place.

An artificial tooth, or crown, is then attached to the metal screw to fill in the gap left by the missing tooth. The crown is specially made to look like the other teeth in size, shape and colour.

How dental implant surgery is performed, depends on the type of implant and the condition of your jawbone. Dental implant surgery may involve several procedures. The major benefit of implants is that it provides solid support for your new teeth. This process requires the bone to heal tightly around the implant, which takes time as bone healing can take many months. Dental implants can also be used to hold a dental bridge or dentures in place.

### Different types of dental implants

There are three common types of dental implants that you can choose from:

- Endosteal
- Subperiosteal
- Zygomatic arch implants

Endosteal implants are the most commonly used dental implant and are made of titanium. They're usually shaped like small screws and are placed in the jawbone. They protrude through the gum to hold the replacement tooth.

If you don't have enough healthy jawbone to support an implant, your dentist might recommend subperiosteal implants. These implants are placed on or above the jawbone and under the gum to protrude through the gum, holding the replacement tooth.

Zygomatic implants are the most complex and are used when there is inadequate bone available in the upper jaw. They are longer in length and instead of relying on the jawbone for fusion, they extend past the upper jaw and anchor into the cheekbones.

Dental Implants	<b>Review Date:</b> 14/09/23	<b>Version:</b> 1	<b>Printed: 11/10/2022</b> <b>Page 1 of 4</b>
		<b>Date of Issue:</b> 14/09/22	
PRINTED COPIES OF THIS DOCUMENT ARE UNCONTROLLED			

## Why might I need a dental implant?

Dental implants may be right for you if you:

- Have one or more missing teeth.
- Have a jawbone that's reached full growth.
- Have adequate bone to secure the implants or are able to have a bone graft.
- Have healthy oral tissues.
- Don't have health conditions that will affect bone healing.
- Are unable or unwilling to wear dentures.
- Want to improve your speech.
- Are willing to commit several months to the process.
- Don't smoke tobacco.

## What happens during a dental implant procedure?

The process of placing a dental implant involves multiple steps, including:

- Damaged tooth removal.
- Jawbone preparation (grafting), when needed.
- Dental implant placement.
- Bone growth and healing.
- Abutment placement (a small metal stud on top of the implant).
- Artificial tooth placement.

The procedure itself takes 1 to 2 hours and the healing time is 3 to 6 months. During this time the titanium implant will heal around and merge with the surrounding bone tissue.

## Pain relief during procedure

To control pain, anaesthesia options during surgery include local anaesthesia, sedation or general anaesthesia. Talk to your dental specialist about which option is best for you. Your dental care team will instruct you about eating and drinking before surgery, depending on what type of anaesthesia you have. If you're having sedation or general anaesthesia, plan to have someone take you home after surgery and expect to rest for the remainder of the day.

Dental Implants	<b>Review Date:</b> 14/09/23	<b>Version:</b> 1	<b>Printed: 11/10/2022</b> <b>Page 2 of 4</b>
		<b>Date of Issue:</b> 14/09/22	
PRINTED COPIES OF THIS DOCUMENT ARE UNCONTROLLED			

### What to expect after a dental implant procedure?

Whether you have dental implant surgery in one stage or multiple stages, you may experience some of the typical discomforts associated with any type of dental surgery, such as:

- Swelling of your gums and face.
- Bruising of your skin and gums.
- Pain at the implant site.
- Minor bleeding.

You may need pain medications or antibiotics after dental implant surgery. If swelling, discomfort or any other problem gets worse in the days after surgery, contact your oral surgeon. After each stage of surgery, you may need to eat soft foods while the surgical site heals. Typically, your surgeon will use stitches that dissolve on their own. If your stitches aren't self-dissolving, your surgeon will remove them.

### What are the benefits and risks of a dental implant?

Like any surgery, dental implant surgery poses some health risks. Problems are rare, however when they do occur they're usually minor and easily treated.

Risks include:

- Infection at the implant site.
- Injury or damage to surrounding structures, such as other teeth or blood vessels.
- Nerve damage, which can cause pain, numbness or tingling in your natural teeth, gums, lips or chin.
- Sinus problems, when dental implants placed in the upper jaw protrude into one of your sinus cavities.

### After treatment plan

Most dental implants are successful. However, sometimes the bone fails to fuse sufficiently to the metal implant. It has been found that smoking, may contribute to implant failure and complications. If the bone fails to fuse sufficiently, the implant is removed, the bone is cleaned up, and you can try the procedure again in about three months.

Dental Implants	<b>Review Date:</b> 14/09/23	<b>Version:</b> 1	<b>Printed: 11/10/2022</b> <b>Page 3 of 4</b>
		<b>Date of Issue:</b> 14/09/22	
PRINTED COPIES OF THIS DOCUMENT ARE UNCONTROLLED			

You can help your dental work and remaining natural teeth last longer if you:

- Practice excellent oral hygiene.
- See your dentist regularly.
- Avoid damaging habits such as not chewing hard items which can break your crowns or your natural teeth.
- Avoid tooth-staining tobacco and caffeine products.
- Seek treatment if you grind your teeth.

### How long do dental implants last?

One of the benefits of dental implants is that they are extremely durable. As long as proper care is taken after the implant procedure, dental implants can last for over 25 years.

### Who is not a good candidate for implants?

Dental implants may not be suitable for everyone. The treatment may not be suitable if you are:

- Over the age of 60.
- Have undergone chemotherapy for cancer treatment.
- Are taking certain medications eg. Some antidepressants, some rheumatoid arthritis medicines, some heartburn medications.
- Have low bone density.
- Have poorly controlled diabetes.
- Drink alcohol excessively.
- A heavy smoker.

### Alternatives to dental implants

The alternatives to dental implants are wearing dentures or having a [dental bridge](#) custom made.

### Sources

[Mayoclinic.org](https://www.mayoclinic.org)

[Healthdirect.gov.au](https://www.healthdirect.gov.au)

Dental Implants	<b>Review Date:</b> 14/09/23	<b>Version:</b> 1	<b>Printed: 11/10/2022</b> <b>Page 4 of 4</b>
		<b>Date of Issue:</b> 14/09/22	
PRINTED COPIES OF THIS DOCUMENT ARE UNCONTROLLED			