

# Choosing Dental Implants

If you had a choice between a set of removable dentures or permanent replacement teeth that look and feel like your own, which would you choose? What if the replacement teeth would also allow you to speak and eat with comfort and confidence, offer you freedom from the irksome clicks and wobbles of dentures, and allow you to say goodbye to worries about misplaced dentures and messy pastes and glues? Dental Implants are growing in popularity and advancing in technology. They are a permanent and effective alternative to dentures.

A dental implant is an artificial tooth root placed into your jaw to hold a replacement tooth or bridge in place. While high-tech in nature, dental implants are actually more tooth saving than traditional bridgework, since they do not rely on neighboring teeth for support. The ideal candidate for a dental implant is in good general and oral health. Adequate bone in your jaw is needed to support the implant, and the best candidates have healthy gum tissues that are free of periodontal diseases.

Once you decide to get a dental implant, there are some different options. Some implants take two to six months for the bone and implant to bond together to form anchors (osseointegration). During this time, you can wear a removable temporary tooth replacement option over the

implant site(s). However, there is now the option of immediate loading, whereby a periodontist places the implant immediately following tooth extraction and attaches a temporary fixed tooth replacement. Depending on your specific condition and the type of implant chosen, your periodontist will create a treatment plan tailored to meet your needs.

Perhaps the most important decision you need to make regarding your dental implants is who should perform the procedure. Since periodontists are the dental experts who specialize in precisely these areas, they are ideal members of your dental implant team. Not only do periodontists have experience working with other dental professionals, they also have the special knowledge, an additional three years of training and facilities that you need to have teeth that look and feel just like your own. Speak with your periodontist about dental implants today.

Just like your own teeth, dental implants require the proper care. In order to keep your implant clean and plaque-free, brushing and flossing still apply! After treatment, your periodontist will work closely with you and your dentist to develop the best care plan for you. Periodic follow-up visits will be scheduled to monitor your implant, teeth and gums to make sure they are healthy.



## Keeping Track of Your Dental Implants

Once you have decided to go ahead with your dental implant, it is important that you keep track of the new addition to your mouth. What if you decide to switch periodontists or general dentists? What if you move? The AAP has recently issued implant ID cards for your convenience. Use these cards to provide important information that could be helpful if another practitioner needs to perform implant maintenance. Ask your periodontist to print out an ID card for you to fill out and keep in your records.

The American Academy of Periodontology Patient Page is a public service of the AAP and should not be used as a substitute for the care and advice of your personal periodontist. There may be variations in treatment that your periodontist will recommend based on individual facts and circumstances. Call 1-800-FLOSS-EM for a free brochure on periodontal disease.



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