

# Discovering the Benefits of Dental Implants



A Patient's Guide

# Are You a Candidate for Dental Implants?

How you feel about yourself affects your relationships, your confidence, and your overall well-being. Making the decision for dental implants may be revealed in your answers to the following questions.

NOTE: For your convenience, you will find a definition of terms located on page 15.

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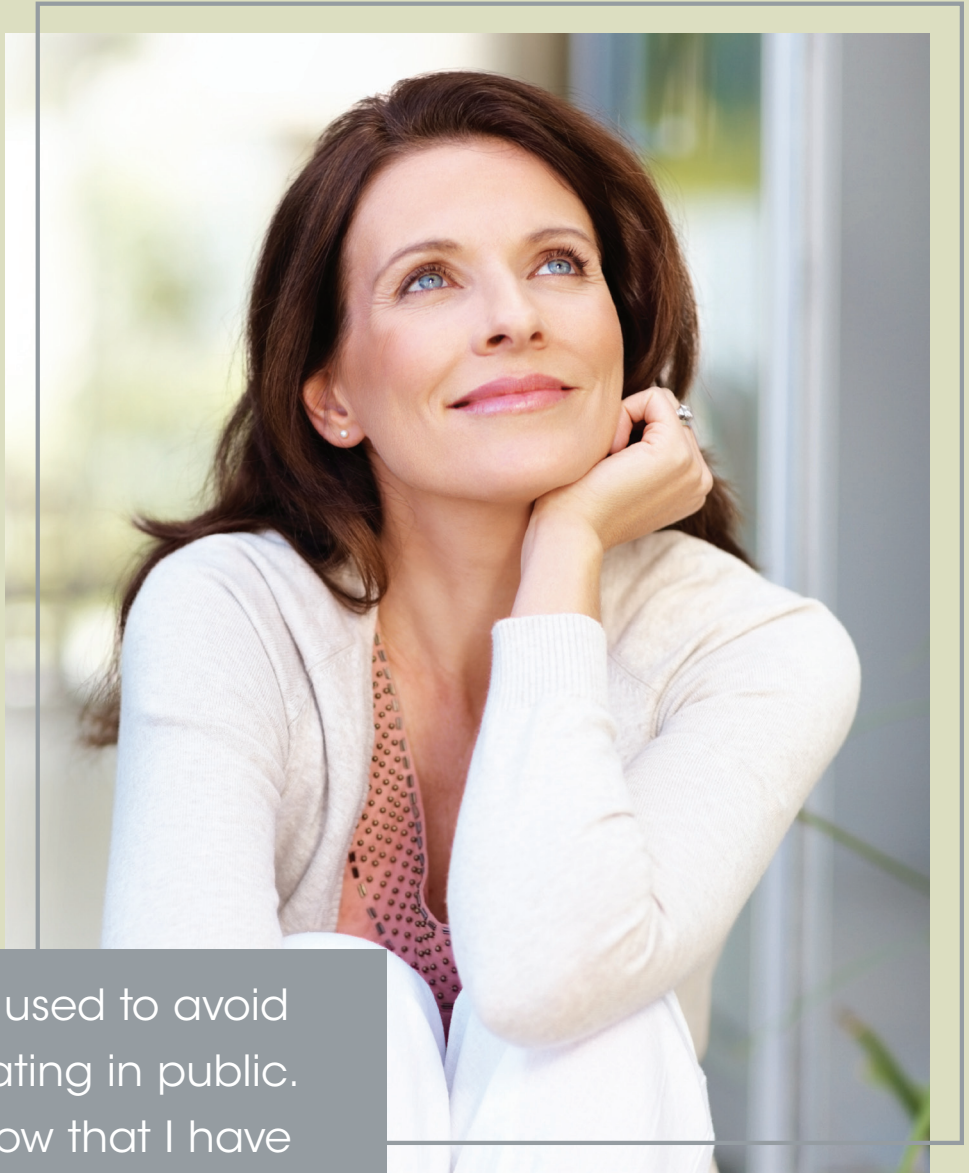
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| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Do you have gaps or spaces between your teeth?                                       |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Do you have retained primary teeth or teeth that have been missing since birth?      |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Have you lost one or more teeth?   |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Are you dissatisfied with the condition of your teeth?                               |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Do you experience discomfort or inconvenience due to removable partials or dentures? |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | If you wear removable dentures, do you find that you have a tendency to gag?         |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Are you embarrassed by the appearance of your teeth when you smile?                  |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Are you dissatisfied with your ability to eat?                                       |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Do you suffer from pain related to your teeth?                                       |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Do you overcook foods to facilitate chewing?   |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Do you have teeth that appear to be loosening?                                       |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Do you feel that tooth loss has affected your:                                       |
|                       | <input type="radio"/> | Appearance   |
|                       | <input type="radio"/> | Professional Life  |
|                       | <input type="radio"/> | Food Choices   |
|                       | <input type="radio"/> | Self Confidence  |
|                       | <input type="radio"/> | Personal Life  |
|                       | <input type="radio"/> | Enjoyment of Food  |
|                       | <input type="radio"/> | Physical Comfort   |
|                       | <input type="radio"/> | Oral Health  |

Given the opportunity, what would you improve about your speech, appearance, comfort, chewing, or taste?

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"I used to avoid eating in public. Now that I have implants, I can eat anything I want with confidence and comfort."

The most attractive,  
natural, and  
comfortable  
replacement for  
missing teeth.

## Introduction

More than half of today's population is affected by the loss of one or more teeth. Because our lifestyles, social activities, and appearances are so much a part of our individual uniqueness, tooth loss may be a deeply personal issue. However, with the latest advancements in dentistry, no one should feel self-conscious about his or her smile, comfort, or ability to eat certain foods. Today, because of dental implants, thousands of people are eating and enjoying foods they have not tasted in years.

If you are missing one or more teeth, dental implants are a great option for replacing those teeth. Implants have a natural look, feel, and function. They are the most attractive, natural, and comfortable replacement for missing teeth. Implants can replace teeth that have been missing since birth, or teeth lost to gum disease, infection, trauma, or decay. They can replace single or multiple teeth, and they can dramatically increase the retention and stability of dentures.

Dental implants distribute chewing forces throughout the jawbone, restoring the chewing power lost with missing teeth, and minimizing the wearing away of the jawbone that normally occurs when teeth are lost. Many patients who have received dental implants comment that they feel a significant improvement in the quality of their lives. They feel more confident and comfortable when they chew and smile. Implants also eliminate many of the problems associated with bridges, removable partials, and full dentures.



"Life is about  
having choices.  
For me, implants  
simply were  
the best option."

# The Consequences of Tooth Loss

When people lose teeth, they also lose the support of underlying bone. As bone reduction occurs, problems associated with the lack of support can lead to denture discomfort, mobility, and lack of retention. Continued loss of bone on the upper and lower jaws can affect the appearance of the overlying facial soft tissue, giving the appearance of advanced aging.

# How Dental Implants Can Benefit You

Dental implants provide a foundation of support in the mouth for artificial teeth, helping to eliminate any embarrassment associated with removable teeth. More importantly, implants improve your ability to chew and speak.

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## Problems Frequently Associated with Dentures

- Difficulty Eating
  - Difficulty Speaking
  - Gagging
  - Decreased Sense of Taste
  - Embarrassment
  - Decreased Self-Esteem
  - Bone Loss
  - Inconvenient Adhesives
  - Pain and Discomfort
-



"For years I had been self-conscious, even with the people closest to me. Implants not only gave me back the confidence I was lacking, but also the freedom to smile and laugh again."

# Most Frequently Asked Questions About Dental Implants:

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## Who Can Benefit From Implants?

Anyone missing teeth, regardless of how they were lost, will benefit greatly from implants. Health, rather than age, is usually the determining factor for prospective patients. Implant patients may be young adults with congenitally missing teeth or premature tooth loss. They may also be accident victims, long-term denture users, or adults who suffer the embarrassment and inconvenience caused by removable teeth.

## Are Dental Implants A New Procedure?

No, quite to the contrary, the implants used today have been developed and perfected within the past 30 years. Many implant procedures have become routine to experienced implant surgeons. There are a variety of implant choices available for almost any situation. Your restorative dentist and implant surgeon will work together to choose the system that is right for you.

## Are Implants Successful?

Some patients have had their implants in place for as many as 30 years. How long an implant remains depends on the patient's general state of health, professional care, home care, and commitment to follow-up. Implants fail for the same reasons that natural teeth fail—one of which is poor oral hygiene. However, the success rate of implants is extremely high.

## What About Rejection or Infection?

Manufacturers make implants from biocompatible materials such as titanium—materials our bodies do not consider foreign. Scientific research, as well as years of implant success have proven that implants do not cause an antigen-antibody response and, therefore, no rejection occurs.





"A car accident caused me to lose almost a third of my teeth. Implants gave me back my desire to be my best."

## Will People Know I Have Implants?

Not unless you tell them. Since the prosthesis (replacement teeth) covers the implants, no implant components can be detected. Your implants will look natural and feel comfortable.

## How Long Does Treatment Take?

Treatment time for surgical placement of implants and healing depends on the location and the type of implants placed. Average procedures can take from 3 to 6 months, depending on pre-existing conditions. The majority of cases allow you to have some form of temporary tooth replacement during treatment.

## How Much Pain is Involved in Implant Placement?

By using the most advanced forms of anesthesia, your implant surgeon will eliminate any pain involved in the placement of your implant. Depending on the complexity of the procedure, your postoperative discomfort will usually be minor. However, your implant surgeon will do everything possible to keep you comfortable. According to most patients, the benefits far outweigh the discomfort.

## Will I Be Able to Chew With The Same Pressure I Use With My Natural Teeth?

Yes! Several scientific studies have determined that your chewing ability will significantly improve following implant placement. After you adjust to the new implants, your chewing ability will match the efficiency that you experience with your natural teeth.

## Are Implants Expensive?

By deciding on implant treatment, you are making an investment in your physical and oral health. The restorative dentist or the surgeon can provide a range of fees depending on the type of implant case selected. In a survey of 350 patients treated with dental implants, all agreed that their implants were worth the investment. Patients overwhelmingly indicate that implants have made a positive change in their lives. Many further indicate that the initial financial outlay was minimal compared to the long-term benefits.



"Since I had a congenitally missing tooth, my dentist, orthodontist, and implant surgeon began planning for a replacement when I was a teenager. My parents had the foresight and patience to help me make the right decision."

# Types of Implants

According to the National Institutes of Health Consensus Conference on Dental Implants, dental implants are a viable treatment option for a number of situations. They can replace a single tooth, a series of teeth, or a full arch. Your dentist and implant surgeon can best determine the correct number and location of implants for you following a thorough examination and consultation.

## Replacing a Single Tooth

The single-tooth replacement is a simple one-for-one substitution for your missing tooth. When you receive a single-tooth implant, you replace a single missing tooth without affecting your healthy natural neighboring teeth. Implants eliminate the need to grind down healthy natural teeth to support bridges.

## Replacing Several Teeth

People with more than one missing tooth will greatly benefit from the placement of one or more dental implants. Since bridges and partials require neighboring teeth to support them, your dentist may have to reshape and compromise your neighboring teeth. However, implants directly replace both the crown and the root of your natural teeth and do not require any support from adjacent teeth.

## Replacing A Full Upper or Lower Jaw

Full dentures may replace missing teeth but they cannot protect your underlying bone. Without the tooth's root, the jawbone will atrophy. Over time, this will result in a changed facial appearance. When your surgeon places dental implants in the upper or lower jaw, the implants act like roots, integrating with your jawbone and maintaining the integrity of your underlying bone.

## Removable Denture Full-Arch Option

The overdenture requires fewer implants than the full-arch replacement and will create a full and attractive smile. Your surgeon places several implants with a bar attached. The overdenture then attaches to the bar. Overdentures offer all the advantages of implants along with the removability of a denture. You'll no longer need to worry about slipping dentures or messy adhesives.

## Teamwork

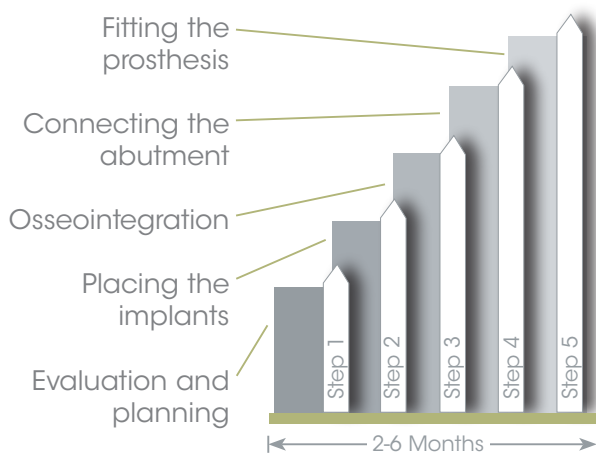
As you move through the implant decision-making process, you will benefit from the professional advice of an experienced, qualified implant surgeon and your restorative dentist. The surgeon and restorative dentist work as a team. Your restorative dentist will work closely with your implant surgeon through every phase of treatment to make your experience safe, comfortable, convenient, and predictable. Together, they will also consult with one another to develop a customized treatment plan that fulfills your aesthetic and functional needs while providing the most predictable long-term results.



"After ten years with a partial denture, I was ready to explore an alternate treatment."

# The Process For Having Implants Placed:

A sample implant timeline is indicated below. While this sample timeline is fairly precise, your actual timeline may vary depending on the complexity of your treatment.



## Implant Evaluation

This portion of your implant treatment consists of a customized detailed consultation and the development of a treatment plan. If you are under a physician's care, or if your medical history indicates, your implant surgeon may request that you consult with your physician. A thorough medical history will help your implant surgeon determine whether there are any conditions that could affect the outcome of treatment. Radiographs (X-rays) are taken, and serve to help your dental team evaluate the current quality and quantity of existing bone. This

information assists your implant surgeon in determining the number and placement of implants, and the length of time required for healing. Should your surgeon need additional diagnostic information, he or she will make that recommendation. This diagnostic information may include an in-office cone beam CT Scan (i-Cat) or study models, or adjunctive procedures prior to placing your implants.

After your consultation, your implant surgeon communicates with your restorative dentist. The dentist will take impressions and make a diagnostic wax-up that records the natural alignment of your teeth and jaw. Surgical guides are then made to direct the exact placement of the implants during surgery. Finally, the implant surgeon and restorative dentist evaluate the information and present the best treatment options.

## Treatment Stage I

In the first stage of treatment, the implant surgeon places the implant in the jawbone. While most implants can be placed with the same kind of local anesthesia used for routine dentistry, many patients prefer the added comfort of intravenous sedation or general anesthesia.

After placing the implants, the implant surgeon covers them with gum tissue and allows the implant to fuse with the underlying bone. Doctors call this process osseointegration, and it usually takes two to four months. Your surgeon will provide detailed instructions on how to care for your mouth following surgery. But during this time, patients often wear a temporary prosthesis.



"After wearing uncomfortable dentures for 25 years, implants were an innovative answer to my continuing problem."

## Treatment Stage II

After the implants have fused to the bone, the patient returns to the implant surgeon's office to have small metal posts, or abutments, placed. These abutments will hold the prosthesis. The doctor can usually accomplish this procedure with local anesthesia, and it may take only an hour. Your restorative dentist may place temporary crowns on these posts, or may modify the temporary dentures, covering the abutments so that they are not visible.

## Treatment Stage III

Shortly following Stage II, the gum tissue surrounding the abutment should have healed enough for your restorative dentist to begin fabricating your prosthesis.

## Follow-Up

After your restorative dentist places the final prosthesis, he or she will need to see you for routine examinations. He or she will advise you how to maintain the health and success of your dental implants. Of course, your restorative dentist and implant surgeon should also be available anytime you need them. And they will want to examine you at regular intervals to ensure all is well.

## Definition of Terms:

**Abutment (or post):** The post attached to both the implant fixture and the prosthesis. The connecting piece that allows the dentist to attach the replacement tooth to the titanium implant.

**Atrophy:** The wasting away of bodily tissues, organs, or bones.

**Bone Loss:** The breakdown and assimilation of the bone that supports the teeth, usually caused by infection or long-term denture wearing.

**Edentulous:** Without teeth. Patients may be described as fully edentulous when they are missing all of their teeth, or partially edentulous when they are missing some of their teeth.

**Cone Beam CT Scan (I-Cat):** A scan that captures multiples images of the head from different angles allowing you to see a true image of the anatomy in three dimensions. These images can optimize implant treatment and placement and the selection of the most suitable implant type, size, location, and angulations prior to implant surgery.

**Implant:** An artificial, cylindrical device, either threaded or smooth, that is implanted within the jawbone as a means to attach an artificial crown, overdenture, or bridge.

**Occlusion:** The coming together of the upper and lower teeth. Also, the relation of the upper and lower teeth; commonly referred to as the "bite."

**Osseointegration:** The process by which living bone (osseo) fuses with the titanium dental implant to form a man-made tooth root.

**Prosthesis:** Crown, bridge, or denture either cemented onto an abutment or held by a small attachment device.

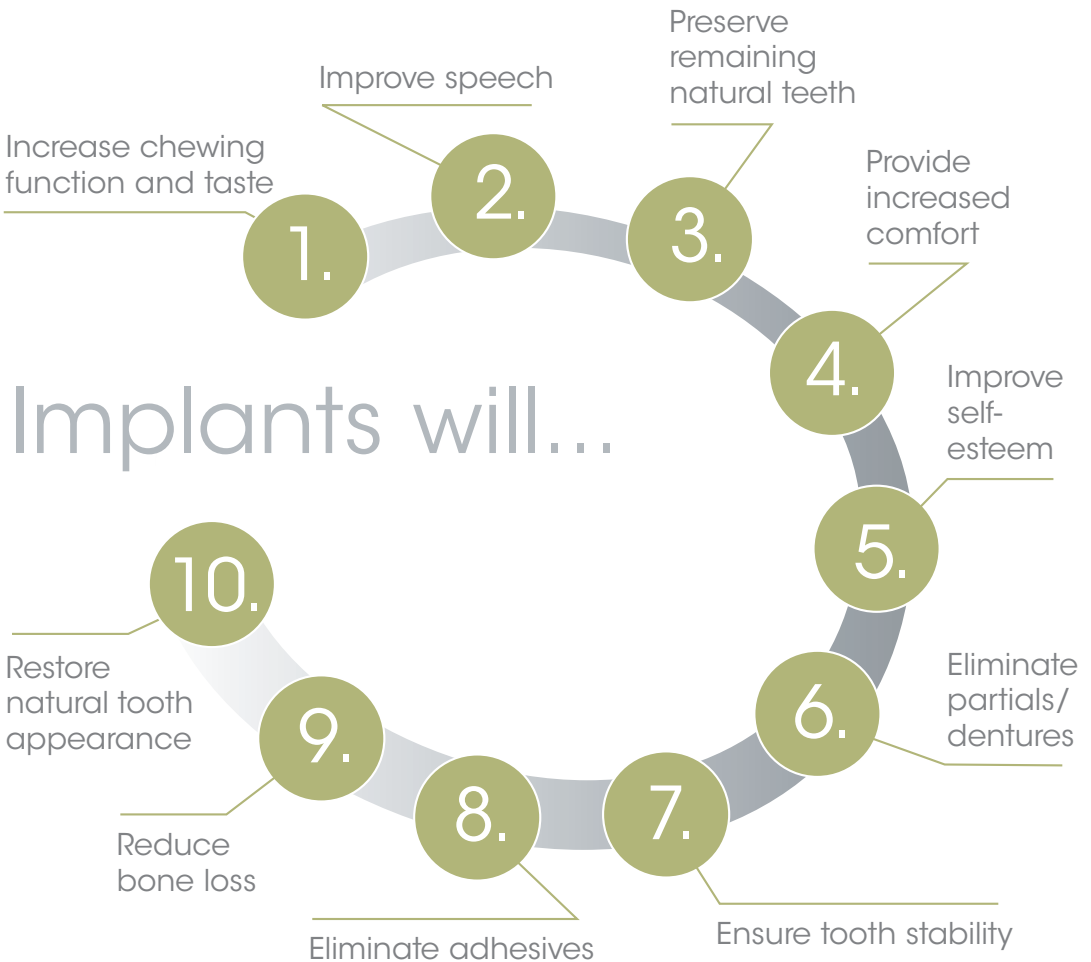
**Resorption:** The breakdown and assimilation of the bone that supports the tooth.





"I never thought that a person my age would have to make a decision about replacing missing teeth. I'm glad I had implants to turn to."

# The Benefits Are Plain and Simple



Implants look, feel, and function just like your natural teeth. The value of dental implants is immense, and the benefits include improving your oral health, enhancing your personal confidence and freedom, and reducing the loss of bone associated with missing teeth. Dental implants are an effective and revolutionary solution to the many problems experienced by patients with missing teeth.



"My implants feel and function like my natural teeth. I wouldn't consider anything else."

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