

Dental Implants

Aside from the obvious cosmetic benefits, replacing missing teeth is an important step to preserving overall oral and general health.

Patients who have experienced tooth loss can experience shifting of adjacent teeth into the vacated space. This creates a malalignment, exposing these existing teeth to decay, gum disease and eventual loss. Speech issues can arise, and a patient's chewing efficiency deteriorates. These long term consequences can be avoided by using Dental Implants to restore the dentition.

Dental Implants are a superior alternative to more conventional techniques. Dental Implants are used in a variety of ways to achieve satisfaction for the patient. They can be used to replace one or multiple missing teeth, to provide an anchoring system for dentures and to replace full or partial dentures with fixed bridgework. They can last for many years with proper care.

In cases where the upper or lower jaw is 'edentulous', meaning all the teeth are missing, bone resorption will occur in the affected jaw. The body re-absorbs the jaw bone that had surrounded the tooth roots, causing the bone to 'shrink'. As the bone shrinks, denture wearers experience loosening of their dentures, causing them to no longer fit properly. Dental implants can be used as anchors for the denture, providing the support necessary to improve its fit, increasing the patient's comfort. In addition, the implant works to decrease the rate of resorption of the affected jaw.

The implant is constructed of specially machined, biocompatible titanium metal. Being biocompatible makes it well accepted by the body once it has been surgically placed into the jawbone. Once implanted, a process called osseointegration begins. That is when the surrounding bone begins to grow into the implant surfaces, attaching to the implant, and anchoring it securely into place.

The Implant Procedure:

With a single tooth, the three stages involved in this process include implanting the artificial root, placement of an abutment, and then placing the artificial tooth or crown.

Consultations with both your oral surgeon and a restorative dentist results in a treatment plan which, once agreed upon, initiates the first surgical visit to place the implant. Customarily, an implant involves two surgical procedures. Occasionally, the healing abutment may be placed at the same time as the implant based upon the established treatment plan. During the next three to six months, the process of osseointegration proceeds. The bone grows into the implant, securely anchoring it into place. During a follow up visit, the implant is uncovered and a healing abutment is placed. The final step is the fabrication of the prosthetic tooth which looks, feels and functions much like the original once did.