

Dental implants

What are they?

Implants are one way of replacing missing teeth.

Unlike normal replacement teeth, dental implants are mounted onto posts which are inserted into the jaw during surgery.



What are the benefits?

Some people can't use removable dentures. Implants can be a last chance for eating and speaking properly and for improving appearance. Implants can keep a denture very stable. People will not be able to see that your teeth are supported by implants.

Are implants for me?

You should discuss with your dentist whether implants would be right for you.

Patients need to have healthy gums, and enough jawbone to take the posts and support the replacement teeth. They must also be prepared to maintain good mouth hygiene and visit the dentist regularly.

Implant patients need to be in good general health, because of the surgery needed. Some chronic diseases, such as diabetes, osteoporosis or chronic sinus problems, could interfere with healing



and make implants more likely to fail. Make sure that you tell your dentist about any medicines that you take regularly, and your smoking habits.

Implants involve undergoing surgery twice or more over a period of several months.

Since they are a complicated form of treatment, implants can be expensive.

What will my dentist do?

Your dentist should tell you about the stages of treatment, who would be carrying out each stage and the timetable for completing treatment. You might be referred to a specialist.

This is what will happen:

- ➔ Bone is exposed in the jaw where the tooth is missing. Then a hole is drilled and a metal post is inserted into the bone. This is usually done under a local anaesthetic, but sometimes sedation or a general anaesthetic is used. The gum is then stitched over the post and it's left to heal for several months, until the bone has grown around the post, making it secure.
- ➔ A second operation then happens, in which replacement teeth are mounted onto the implant. This requires a small cut in the gum above the implant. The replacement teeth might be single or in a group, and possibly as a 'bridge', attached to neighbouring natural teeth. They may be fixed permanently or attached in a way that lets you remove them for cleaning.