

# Dental Implants



Between the ages of 35 and 44, 69 percent of all adults have lost at least one permanent tooth. By the time people are 74, 26 percent of them have lost every remaining tooth.

For someone who has lost one or more teeth, or whose teeth are so diseased that they have become a problem, dental implants are considered to be as close as it gets to replacing the original teeth. Sometimes implants are also used to support full or partial dentures. This works well because it can help the dentures function better than they would otherwise.

A person with dental implants can chew food correctly again, will look better than someone who is missing one or more teeth, and won't have to go through the cleaning and maintenance that is necessary for someone with dentures. Better still, the success rate for implants is almost 95 percent.

Implants are comfortable and stable, and dentists have been performing them for decades now, so the techniques and materials are well-established. It may feel a little different when you chew because they don't have a periodontal ligament, but it will still be comfortable.

Dentures and bridges have significant problems associated with them:

- ▶ Dentures can affect bone loss and often don't work that well. Bones support teeth, but if you

lose the teeth, the bone is like a muscle that doesn't get used. It wastes away.

- ▶ Partial dentures put additional stress on remaining adjacent teeth.
- ▶ Fixed bridges harm the healthy teeth next to them. The teeth have to be made shorter as part of the installation process.
- ▶ Fixed bridges and dentures both need to be replaced periodically. For most people, that happens at least every seven to 15 years.
- ▶ For someone with teeth next to a bridge or partial denture, 30 percent are likely to fail within five to seven years.

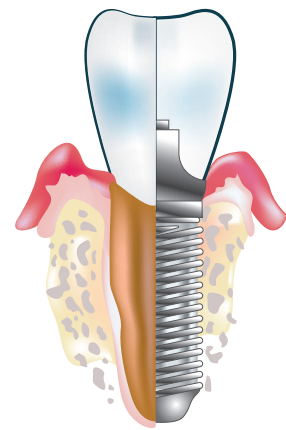
## The Criteria

Would an implant work for you?

- ▶ You need to be generally healthy.
- ▶ Your gums should be healthy, too.
- ▶ There should be an adequate amount of bone in order to support the implant.
- ▶ You must practice good oral hygiene after you get the implant.
- ▶ As always, you should continue to visit the dentist regularly, at least twice a year, to check for cavities or other problems and to have your teeth professionally cleaned.

## Understanding How the Implant Works

Implants are usually made of titanium because titanium fuses well with bone. The implants that are generally being used today are called root-form endosseous implants. This kind of implant is designed to mimic the function of a tooth's root, but it is usually a cylinder that looks somewhat like a screw. It is placed within the bone of the upper or lower jaw, where it can fuse (that is, osseointegrate) with the bone. The fusing process generally takes three to six months. Once the implant has fused with the bone, the dentist can attach a post, or extension, to the implant. Finally, the dentist takes a crown that has been designed to match the existing teeth and attaches it to the implant post. The work to place an implant, the implant post, and the crown is generally done in two or three separate visits, depending on how the implant is being done.



If you are interested in the benefits of getting an implant, start by talking with our office so we can determine whether an implant would work for you.