

Question:

Can I get gum disease round the implants?

Answer:

Yes, if you don't care for them well enough. If you keep them clean and don't smoke this will reduce the risk of problems.

Question:

Can I take the teeth out if they are fixed to implants?

Answer:

Most artificial teeth attached to implants are fixed and can only be removed by your dentist. However if you have a full set of dentures supported by implants you can remove these at home yourself for cleaning.

Question:

Do the implants show?

Answer:

The implants do not show during normal movements of the mouth and lips, but may need to be made so that you can see them for adequate cleaning.

Question:

Do I have an implant to replace each missing tooth?

Answer:

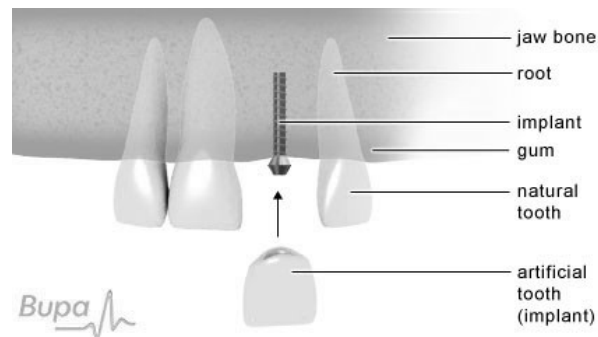
No, not unless you are only having one tooth replaced. Normally an entire jaw of teeth can be supported on five or six implants, as each implant can usually support two teeth. For a few missing teeth you may only need two or three implants.

Question:

What if I have an accident?

Answer:

Implants and the teeth they support are just as liable to damage as your own teeth in an accident. Always wear a sportsguard for contact sports, and your dentist may suggest taking out specialist insurance. If an implant is damaged it may be possible to remove it and place a new one, or sometimes it is better to leave the damaged implant in place and fit another alongside it.

**Question:**

What happens if the implant does not bond with the bone?

Answer:

This happens very rarely. If the implant does not bond it may be removed to allow new bone to fill in, and then another implant tried, or a new implant site may be used instead.

Question:

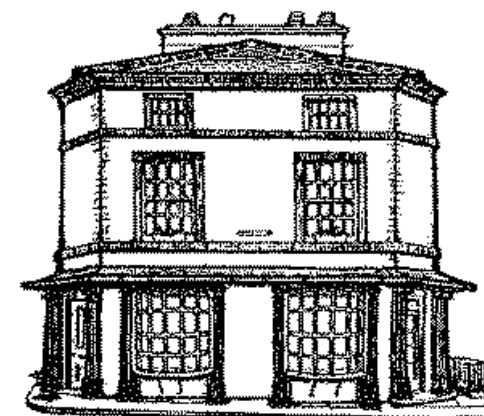
Is the treatment expensive?

Answer:

Unfortunately yes. It is a highly specialised treatment using expensive equipment and materials. Your dentist can explain the costs involved before treatment starts.

As implants are a long-lasting solution, over the longer term they can be a very cost effective and satisfactory solution.

Implants



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Question:

What are dental implants?

Answer:

A dental implant is a titanium rod that is placed into the jawbone. It is used to support one or more false teeth. In practice the false teeth and their supporting rods are collectively referred to as implants.

Question:

Are implants safe and how long will they last?

Answer:

Implants are a well-established, tried and tested treatment. Over 95% of implants should last for many years with the right care.

Question:

I have some of my own teeth, can I still have implants?

Answer:

Yes, you can have any number of teeth replaced with implants, from a single tooth to a full set.

Question:

Can implants always be used to replace missing teeth?

Answer:

It depends on the condition of the bone in your jaw. Your dentist will arrange for a series of specialist tests to find out the amount of bone left. If there is not enough, or if it isn't healthy enough, it may not be possible to place implants without grafting more bone into the area first.

Question:

Do implants hurt?

Answer:

Placing implants requires a small operation. This is usually done under local anaesthetic, sometimes with sedation if you are very nervous. For a more complex case a general anaesthetic may be required. You should not feel any pain at the time, but you may have some discomfort during the week after surgery. This is usually due to having stitches and the normal healing process.

Question:

How long does the treatment take?

Answer:

Your dentist will be able to give you a rough timetable before treatment starts. Usually the permanent teeth are fitted 6 to 9 months after the implants are put in, but newer implant systems can allow the time to be as short as 3 months. Some teeth can even be fitted at the same time as the implant. These are known as "immediate implants" but are not suitable in all cases.

Question:

What about aftercare?

Answer:

Your dentist may give you some pain relief after surgery, or recommend medication to take at home if required. You may also be prescribed antibiotics. Do not smoke, exercise or drive for the rest of the day. Don't rinse the area, and only eat soft foods. However it is important that

you keep your mouth clean by brushing, but do not poke or over-brush the implant site. A mouthwash containing chlorhexidine should be used for the first week after surgery. You can get this from your dentist or most chemists and supermarkets.

Question:

What happens next?

Answer:

The implants need to bond with the bone after they have been put in. This usually takes at least 3 months in the lower jaw, and at least 6 months in the upper jaw. Sometimes the implants are stable enough for the artificial teeth to be attached sooner than this.

If you are having a small number of teeth replaced you may have a temporary denture in the meantime. If you have a full set of dentures they may be modified after surgery to fit over the implants until the healing phase is complete.

Question:

Are the teeth difficult to clean?

Answer:

No, but aftercare is important if you are going to have a long lasting and successful implant. Your dentist will give you detailed advice on aftercare and will want to regularly check the implants visually and with x-ray images.

Cleaning around the implants may be more difficult than cleaning your own teeth, but you will be shown methods to help you, and you may need to visit your hygienist more often.