



This document provides general information about dental implant surgery and dental implant maintenance. Not all information applies to every patient; for specific information about your diagnosis, treatment options, surgery, recovery, and maintenance, be sure to ask your doctor.

What is dental implant surgery?

Dental implants are a replacement for a missing tooth or teeth. Dental implants can also be used to provide support for a fixed bridge or dentures. Dental implant surgery is a team effort that includes you as the patient, your doctor and sometimes additional providers or specialists, all working together to design a treatment plan that meets your needs and provides an optimal outcome.

Implant placement can be completed in a single appointment or in phases over time, depending on the treatment plan. Typically, the implant and the temporary healing abutment will be placed. Then, after appropriate healing, the permanent abutment and final restoration will be placed. Depending on your treatment plan, restorative options may include a single crown, a fixed bridge, or a denture to provide the appearance and function of a natural tooth or teeth. While some implants can be restored immediately, healing time may be required for implant integration, or fusing to the bone, before a final restoration can be placed.

During surgery, your doctor may discover the quality or quantity of your bone may not support the initial restorative treatment plan. This may result in a change to the planned restoration. Your doctor will discuss options with you following surgery. Some patients may require a bone graft at the implant site due to inadequate bone from previous extractions, gum disease, or injuries. Bone grafting may be performed as a separate procedure prior to implant placement and require a period of healing or bone grafting can be completed at the same time as implant placement. There are several options for obtaining bone for bone grafting, including bone from a tissue bank or using bone from your own body to rebuild the dental implant site. If bone grafting is required for your surgery, your doctor will discuss the treatment options with you.

Preparing for Surgery

Your doctor will provide you with specific instructions to help you prepare for surgery. A few common instructions include: if you should take your regularly prescribed medications, the time to arrive for surgery, how long your surgery will take, and your discharge plans. Depending on the type of anesthesia you and your

doctor have decided on, you may be instructed not to eat or drink for at least six to eight hours prior to surgery. Be sure to ask your doctor about how to prepare for your surgery.

Dental Implant Risks

While all surgery carries risks, your doctor will try to prevent, minimize, and control these risks. Nonetheless, it is important for you to understand these risks before your surgery. Your doctor cannot guarantee the results of the procedure and the length of time needed to complete treatment may vary for each patient.

Implant Failure and Patient Responsibilities

Implant integration can be affected by several factors including trauma from either temporary replacement teeth or excessive loading, or chewing, your bone density, certain medications you may be taking, or certain medical conditions including diabetes.

Hard, sticky, or chewy foods may impact successful implant integration. Your doctor may alter your diet to limit these foods while the implant integrates. Continuing to smoke or vape, and otherwise not following your doctor's instructions, may also cause the implant to fail. Poor oral hygiene can also affect implant integration.

For long-term success, you need to care for dental implants with the same routine care as your natural teeth. This includes brushing, flossing, and regular cleanings. If not well cared for, your gums around the implant may become infected which can lead to discomfort, infection, bone loss, and the eventual loss of the implant. It is important that you understand your responsibilities related to the long-term maintenance of your dental implant. The treatments for implant failure vary based on the cause and severity of the failure. Some patients may require more frequent cleanings, education on improving dental hygiene, and antibiotics. Others may require additional surgery, bone grafting, or implant replacement.