

# Dental Implants



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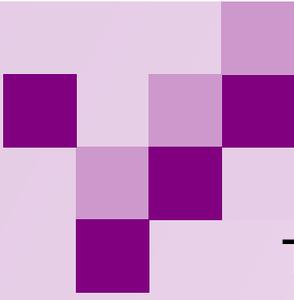
Have you ever heard of the phrase, “A smile never goes out of fashion?” From celebrities to the everyday citizen, everyone would love to have a beautiful, bright smile. Making sure your smile is beautiful involves regular dental care and using the correct dental techniques. However, sometimes getting that perfect smile takes a little more effort. Day to day life can take its toll on your overall oral health. The tooth you did not get to in time, a past accident, or even an abnormal tooth you were born with can all leave their negative impact on your smile. Don’t let your imperfections damage your confidence. With the new advances in dentistry, achieving the perfect smile is easier than ever.



## The Science of a Great Smile

Scientific studies have shown that only about 30% of humans smile more than 20 times a day. You might be thinking, why is the number not higher? Dental issues are a huge hindrance in a person's willingness to smile, and can even prevent a great grin from naturally shining through. We are naturally programmed as humans to want to return a smile, smile at children, or even use it to attract members of the opposite sex. In essence, smiling is one of the most basic human functions. Smiles even cross cultures, making it a key part of communication.

A smile is not just a part of who you are as a person, it is also an indication of your success. According to a University of California Berkeley 30-year longitudinal study, researchers were able to find a correlation between wider, more natural-looking smile and a person's general success in life. Factors that were included in the study were: how high individuals would score on standardized tests, how long their marriage lasted, and how they tested on their general well-being. At the conclusion of the study, it was found that the wider smile the participant had, the higher they ranked on a happiness and success scale.



## The Health Behind Your Smile

By looking at research studies, it is easy to see how important a smile actually is to your overall life. However, taking care of your dental health, especially if you have missing or broken teeth, is not just limited to your mental well-being. Your dental health can also have a tremendous impact on your overall health. Some of the other compelling reasons to get your teeth repaired are:

### ***You will be able to eat healthier food.***

Missing, broken, or damaged teeth make chewing more difficult, particularly healthier foods such as crunchy vegetables and fruits. When eating is less painful, you are more willing to add these foods to your diet and enjoy them regularly.

### ***You will have a lower risk of oral cancer.***

When you have a mouth full of damaged teeth, you are allowing dangerous levels of bacteria to build up in your mouth. Studies have shown a drastic link between neglected teeth and certain oral cancers. Additionally, regular dental visits mean your dentist will be able to promptly identify any potential cancer risks.

### ***The rest of your teeth will have a better chance of survival.***

Cavities and dental diseases easily spread throughout your mouth, affecting your healthy teeth. By putting off treatment, you are not doing your oral health any favors. Cavities and other trouble spots can harbor bacteria that can soften the enamel of other healthy teeth.

### ***You are helping your heart.***

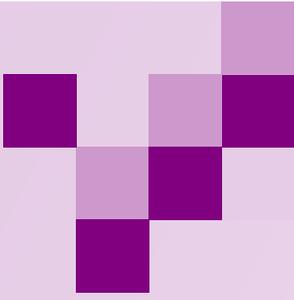
Countless studies have shown a correlation between heart health and periodontal disease. The most recent studies have shown that those with poor oral health have more heart attacks. Other studies have shown that the build-up of plaque and inflammation in the mouth is very similar to that of the heart.



## Getting (And Keeping) The Look

Your face is shaped and supported by a series of bones, and your teeth play an extremely important role in this. As you loose or break teeth, it can seriously affect both the shape of your mouth and your face. There are studies that speculate that loosing teeth can actually add 10 years to the appearance of your face. Additionally, loosing teeth in the front of your mouth can result in the appearance of thinner lips for women. This can cause an older look, dragging the mouth downwards and adding years to your expression. Many cosmetic surgeons also feel that missing or broken teeth can lead to further damage to the jaw, causing a drooping appearance in your soft tissue.

Given all the reasoning, you should make your dental health a priority in your life, particularly if you have broken, missing, or damaged teeth. Considering the long increase damage that delaying treatment can create, it becomes clear why you should act now rather than putting it off until later. Failing to take adequate care of your teeth can harm not only your self esteem and interactions with other people, but it can also lead to potential health issues that you certainly want to avoid. When you have made the decision to take care of your dental problems, then it is time to determine which method you want to use. While there are several options available, more and more people are turning to dental implants as a permanent solution for their missing, broken, or damaged teeth.



## Finding Solutions

Missing and broken teeth have been a problem that has been around for generations, and over the years many solutions have been brought forward to try to tackle it. The most common route taken in the past was the use of removable dentures. It is a common misconception that in early time, false teeth, or dentures, were made of wood. In actuality, most early bridge work for missing or broken teeth were made of bone, hippopotamus ivory, human teeth, brass screws, leas, and gold wire. Dentures were traditionally considered painful and difficult to eat with– both of which are still complaints today.

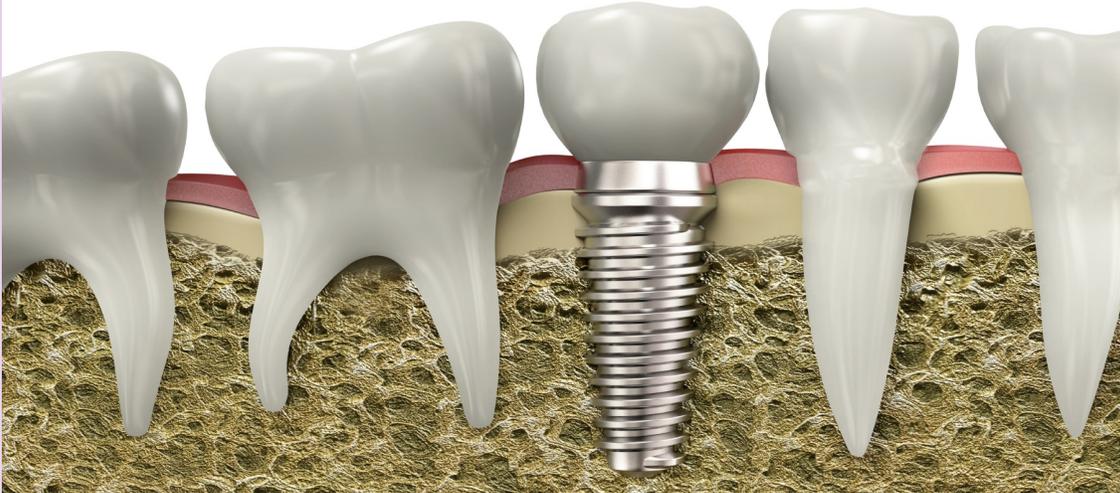
## Partials or Removable Dentures

Thankfully, dentistry has moved on from these times and new solutions are offered nearly every year. Though dentures have moved on throughout the years, they still have their problems. While cost effective, removable, or partial dentures are often difficult to eat with, preventing the wearer from enjoying their favorite foods. There is also the problem of removable dentures falling out when sneezing or coughing.

## Fixed Dentures or Bridges

Like partial dentures, fixed dentures offer a “stand-in” for any missing or broken teeth you have in your mouth. However, rather than acting as removable hardware implement, fixed dentures are in your mouth permanently. A custom-created bridge will also be fitted for your mouth, then attached to adjacent teeth. However, fixing these dentures to the adjacent, healthy teeth can cause quite a bit of damage, resulting in further dental repair down the road.

A new procedure was born to address the concerns that people had with both removable and fixed dentures. Though now frequently used as a solution for those who have lost a single tooth, dental implants were first developed for those who had lost all of their teeth. With full oral tooth loss, it becomes difficult and painful to stabilize dentures, making it nearly impossible for the patient to eat. Dental implants offer a more stable and practical solution to this problem.

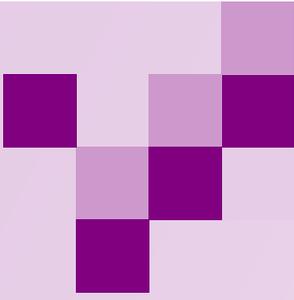


## What Are Dental Implants?

Dental implants offer a lasting solution to any broken or missing that you may be experiencing. Like most dental procedures, implants have improved drastically throughout the years. Though it may seem like a major or even scary procedure, they have evolved to the point where they are often as comfortable as any other procedure you may have done, such as a filling or even a cleaning. In order to understand the elements of a dental implant, it is often easiest to think of it like a natural tooth.

Your teeth are structures consisting of a root and crown. The portion of the tooth you see in your mouth when you open is the crown, and the root is what anchors your tooth to your jaw and soft tissue below. When a tooth is weakened either by stress, decay or trauma, any portion of the tooth can become unstable, causing damage to the rest of the structure. This can result in cavities, root canals, or even complete tooth loss or breakage.

Dental implants are the “root” devices, made out of titanium which are used in dental restorations. The titanium portion stands in for what was originally the tooth, and the tailor-made crowns are then created to match your previous tooth in both color and shape. Dental implants can be used to support a number of restorations, including crowns and implant supported bridges or dentures.



## Single Implant vs. Implant Hybrid (denture and bridge)

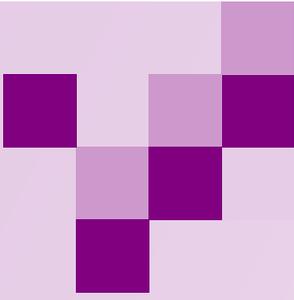
Depending on how many teeth you have that require replacement, you may opt for either a single implant or an implant bridge. A single implant is just that- a single tooth being replaced using the dental implant process. However, if you have multiple missing or damaged teeth that need replacement, opting for an implant hybrid can offer a better solution than dentures. During the implant hybrid procedure, multiple implants will be inserted and the hybrid will screw into them, creating a permanent solution to your tooth loss. We will be able to help you determine which solution is best for your situation.

## Why Consider Dental Implants?

Implants can often make the most sense for repairing any broken or missing teeth you may have. Not only do they offer a permanent solution, but they also look, feel and act just like your natural teeth. This can make eating, talking and even smiling a much more comfortable situation. Additionally, dental implants can help to keep your jawbone healthy. Though many might initially be concerned about the cost of implants, in the long run, they can actually make the most financial sense. Once they are permanently implanted, they prevent your other teeth from shifting, thus protecting your bite and the possibilities of problems in your healthy teeth. They are also one of the longest-lasting dental procedures. With regular care, some patients have had no problems with their implants at all for up to 18 years and even longer with regular maintenance.

## How Does The Dental Implant Procedure Work?

Getting your new implants installed is a multi-step process, but it is usually neither time consuming or painful, which is surprising to most patients. Using x-rays and CBCT imaging, we are now able to determine the exact requirement and placements for the most successful dental implants. In order for you to understand what to expect when you are "in the chair," it is important that you know what steps will need to be taken before you even step foot in the office.



## **Will you have a full evaluation and assessment?**

When you sit down with our doctors, they will discuss the full extent as to what will be involved with your procedure. At this time they will also investigate your full health history, as well as any goals you have for your oral health treatment. They will give you a full examination to determine if dental implants are the right course of action for you, as well as determine if any further procedures will be required to ensure the most successful implantation. This could include: bone grafting, a sinus lift, or gum surgery.

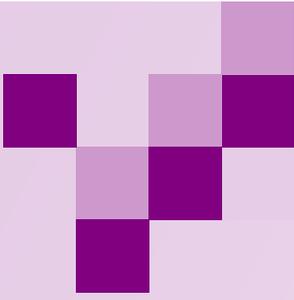
## **You will then have your procedure visit.**

When any additional work that was required has been completed and our doctors determine that you are ready to receive your implants, you will come in for the procedure. If it has not been done already, the tooth that the implant will replace will be extracted. This will have to be done before we can correctly place your new implant.

If extractions are not required, you will go right into the implant process. First, your mouth will be numbed and made ready. Then our doctors will shape a small insertion point or channel in your jawbone for your implant. Finally, your implant will be placed in the prepared spot. This is a lot less frightening than it sounds, your teeth naturally extend down into your jawbone, ensuring that your new tooth has something sturdy to hang on to as you eat, talk, and smile.

## **Your implant will be given time to fuse to your jawbone.**

In order for your new implant to be correctly placed, it will take a few months of healing so it can correctly fuse to the bones in your jaw. During this time, we may place a temporary restoration for you, or a cover to protect the new implant. Our doctors will discuss with you which is the best option for your particular procedure.



## **Your custom-made tooth is placed.**

Once your implant is healed and ready to continue the procedure, a small extension, known as an abutment, will be placed on your titanium post to bring your implant above the gum line. Then, our doctors will take an impression of your mouth to get the most accurate model possible to ensure your new restoration is both accurately placed and comfortable. These custom crowns will fit your bite perfectly, as they are custom-made for each patient. When your new crown is ready, it will be securely fitted to your implant.

## **You are ready to go!**

Your new implant is now as secure as a natural tooth! Unlike other dental procedures, getting a dental implant does not require any “off” time, such as not eating, drinking, or favoring one side over another chewing for extended periods of time. Many patients report that they do not feel very much pain post-treatment, requiring little to no painkillers after the procedure.

## **The Fear Factor**

Fear is a common feeling in any dental procedure. In fact, most people actually harbor a fear factor when going to the dentist for even the most basic care. This is often a cause for the spread of dental decay and broken and missing teeth, as people will put off seeing their dentist until they are in pain. A dental implant procedure however is usually easy, even for those who have a fear factor at the thought of visiting the dentist’s office.

During the procedure, there are several options for you to consider to help manage your pain and fear. Most people are fine with a local anesthetic for the actual procedure and over-the-counter medication following it. However, if you are still feeling nervous when you arrive laughing gas is always an option to calm your nerves, or even a pre-appointment sedative medication.



## Healing From Your Dental Implant

When it comes to healing with your new implant, it can oftentimes be easier than other, more common dental procedures. Typically, your tooth is ready to “use” right away. This means you can eat, drink, chew, and do all the things that you would normally do straight from our dental chair. Usually, patients feel strange having a tooth where one has been missing or broken for awhile. This feeling will quickly pass as you and your tongue get used to your new dental implant.

If you are concerned about post-procedure pain, it is important that you discuss this with your dentist prior to your dental implants being placed. Additionally, should you feel any additional pain the next day, be sure to let us know. Not only can we help to alleviate your discomfort, we may also have you come in to check that everything is set right with your new implant.



## Common Questions & Answers

### **Will my implant look natural?**

Yes. Your implant will be created just for you by the lab and crafted to look almost exactly like the tooth you have lost. They will also select the appropriate shade to match the rest of your teeth, making it virtually impossible to detect that you have had dental surgery or an implant.

### **Is getting a partial or bridge a lot cheaper than an implant?**

At first, it can be. However, partial and fixed dentures can damage healthy teeth that you currently have in your mouth as they need to attach to them to stay in place. This can cause scratches in the surface of your enamel and lead to cavities and decay. So while it is less expensive at first, it can actually end up being more expensive in the long run.

### **What about infection?**

Your new implant will be placed using sterile equipment. Additionally, as the tooth is “rooted” to your jaw through the titanium post and abutment to ensure that food particles and bacteria cannot enter. Most patients report little to no problems with infection after their procedure and onwards as long as they are coming in regularly to get it checked and cleaned as well as keeping proper care at home.

### **I have heard that crowns only last 8 years or so. How is this different?**

You are right that, in general, crowns only last for about 8 years. That is where dental implants are different. According to Dr. DeLaura, some patients find their implants can last for well beyond the 15 year mark without any issues whatsoever. While everyone is different, he speculates that with regular dental care, your implants can give you a lifetime of use.

### **What kind of aftercare does a dental implant require?**

Like a natural tooth, your implant requires regular dental care. Brushing, flossing, and regular check-ups should be part of your routine already, and this is all your implant will require as well. Try to look at your new implant as just another one of your own healthy teeth.



## Some Terms You Need To Know

### **Abutment**

The abutment is the extension that is placed on the implant to bring it above the gumline, and the crown (the visible part of your tooth) is then attached to this.

### **Arch**

Your teeth consist of two arches, which are essentially your top set of teeth and your bottom set of teeth. When our doctors speak of your arch, they are referring to both the bone and the soft tissue (gums) that form your full set of teeth.

### **Implant Bridge**

Occasionally you will need to replace more than one tooth, and this can be accomplished by the use of a bridge, rather than using individual implants. This can help to “bridge the gap” that is created by missing or broken teeth that you may have. Much like a single implant, a bridge is fixed to a series of titanium posts and acts much like your natural teeth without damaging adjacent teeth.

### **Crown**

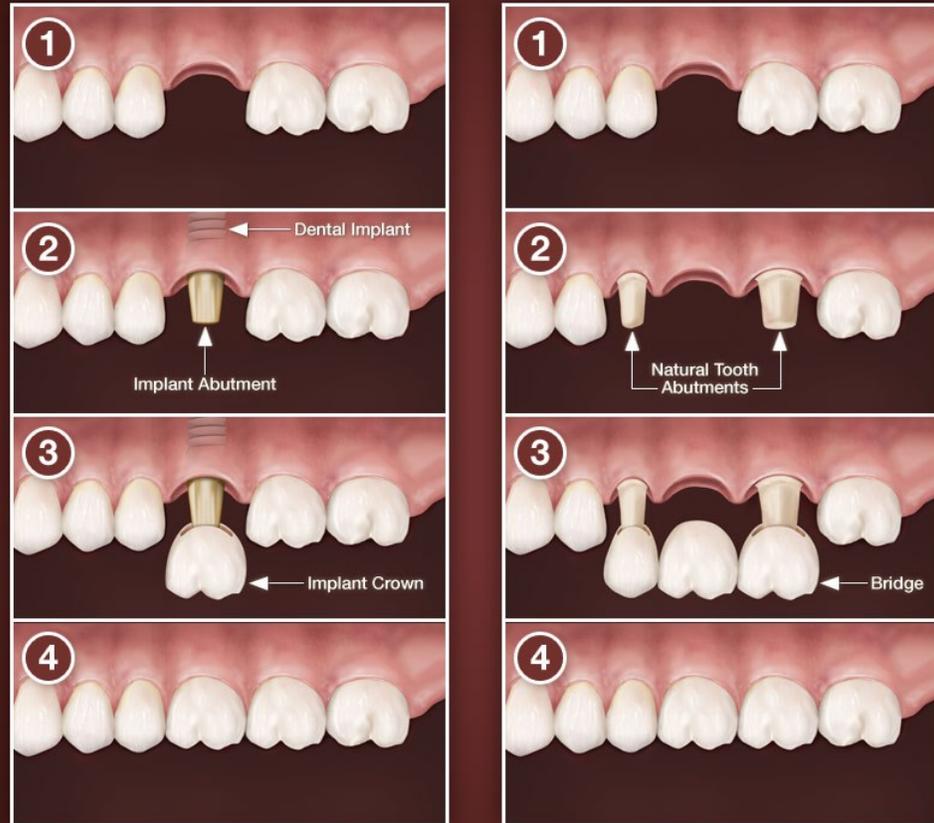
This is the part of the tooth that you can see, and can refer to either a dental implant or even your natural tooth.

### **Fixed Denture or Bridge**

Bridges offer a “stand-in” for any missing or broken teeth you have in your mouth. However, rather than acting as a removable hardware implement, bridges instead are in your mouth permanently. These are custom-created and installed by our doctors. Bridges are cemented to adjacent teeth in your mouth.



## Dental Implant vs Bridgework



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### Partial Denture

This is essentially a removable denture that you can take out at night and acts as a device to stand in for any missing teeth you may have. The crowns are attached to a gum-colored base which is then connected by a framework that attaches to adjacent teeth and holds the denture in place.

### Post or Body of the Implant

When you are having dental implants inserted, you will first need to have titanium “posts” inserted into your jaw to act as a stabilizing factor. The crown will then be added to the top for a natural look.