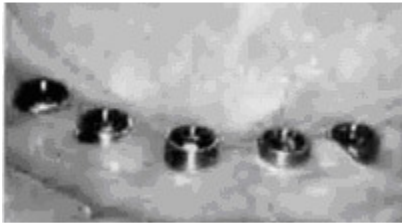


Dental Implants



Dental implants are very durable and will last many years. They require the same "maintenance" as real teeth, including brushing, flossing and regular dental check-ups. Dental implants can help restore almost anyone's smile even if natural teeth have been lost to injury or disease.

A very common reason people consider implants is because a sliding lower denture makes chewing and talking difficult. Implants can also replace individual teeth and partial bridges in the upper and lower jaws. The majority of patients treated with dental implants experience a significant improvement in their ability to chew food and feel more comfortable.

Dental implants are permanent fixtures of titanium posts anchored to the jawbone and topped with individual replacement teeth or a bridge that screws or cements into the posts. Implant technology and materials used today in the United States were developed more than 30 years ago in Europe. The success rate for implants is remarkable: 98 percent for lower implants and 91 percent for upper implants.

Nearly everyone who can have routine dental care can successfully use implants. Many people who consider implants have removable, conventional dentures for lower and upper jaws, or have removable bridges that clasp to adjacent teeth. A permanent bridge supported by 2-4 metal posts in the lower jaw, accompanied by a complete conventional denture for the upper jaw, is a very common use for dental implants for people who wear complete dentures. Dental implants include strategically placed posts -- one, a few or several -- which serve as artificial tooth roots for a permanent bridge of non-removable, stable, natural appearing replacement teeth, in many cases when patients have many of their own teeth remaining.

Single teeth or a full arch of teeth, which have been extracted due to injury or disease and replaced with a removable bridge, can be replaced with dental implants. The teeth can be replaced by a non-removable, fixed bridge or by an overdenture that may help with facial support. Implants are very durable, will last many years, and require the same "maintenance" as real teeth, including brushing, flossing and regular dental check-ups.

To ensure the best possible outcome, prospective implant patients are screened by a team of dental implant specialists at the UI College of Dentistry. The team includes either a periodontist or an oral and maxillofacial surgeon who implants the posts into the patient's mouth, and a prosthodontist who designs and makes the replacement teeth or permanent bridge. At the screening appointment, the specialists use an X-ray of the patient's mouth to determine if the bone in the jaw is adequate to hold the titanium posts. Models of the mouth may be made using a soft, pliable plastic compound.

The models accurately show where the gaps are located and provide measurements for a replacement tooth or a bridge. Treatment with dental implants is complicated and takes meticulous planning for best results. Additional X-rays and models of the mouth may be necessary.

More information at: <http://www.dentistry.uiowa.edu/public/oral/implant.cfm>