

Choose a Dental Implant to Replace a Missing Tooth.



Dental Implant

In many cases, a dental implant is the ideal solution to replace a missing tooth. Historically, patients with a missing tooth chose a fixed bridge or removable partial denture. Cosmetic appearance, longevity, treatment time, and cost are factors which may make a dental implant the preferred choice (Figure 1).



Figure 2: Dental Implant without Attached Crown



Figure 3: Dental Implant with Attached Crown

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Figure 1: Dental implant; superior cosmetic appearance.

Dental implants are screw-like structures (Figure 2) that replace the missing tooth placed into the jawbone by your Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeon. A crown, which resembles the natural tooth, is attached to the implant (Figure 3). Dental implants mimic the appearance and function of natural teeth. The implant will not move when eating or speaking. Dental implants' average life span is 15 to 25 years. Unlike a traditional bridge, dental implant placement does not compromise the structure of adjacent teeth.

Removable Partial Denture

Conclusions

A dental implant may be the recommended solution to replace a missing tooth for the following three reasons:

Fixed Bridge

A fixed bridge is an option to replace missing teeth. Teeth adjacent to the missing tooth are cut down and used as anchors to attach to the bridge (*Figure 4*). Bone loss, which can occur in the area of the missing tooth, may result in a compromised cosmetic appearance. A fixed bridge has an average life span of 5 to 15 years. The out-of-pocket cost for a fixed bridge is comparable to a dental implant.



Figure 4: Teeth cut down on each side.



Figure 5: Removable Partial Denture

A removable partial denture is made of pink acrylic, white plastic teeth, and metal framework (*Figure 5*). The partial denture is held in the mouth by metal clasps which attach to the natural teeth. The partial denture can move around in the mouth causing difficulty with eating and speaking. Bone loss can occur where the teeth are missing, resulting in a less than favorable cosmetic appearance. The average life span of a removable partial denture is 5 to 7 years. The cost of a removable partial denture is typically half of a fixed bridge or dental implants.

- 1) A superior esthetic result can be achieved because bone loss is minimized, adjacent teeth are not cut down, metal clasps are not required, and there is no movement when eating or speaking.
- 2) The average life span is 10 years longer than a fixed bridge and 15 years more than a removable partial denture.
- 3) The overall time and cost of an implant is less than a fixed bridge or removable partial denture when factoring in the cost of their replacement due to shorter life span of a bridge or denture.

Replacing a missing tooth with a dental implant will result in a superior cosmetic appearance, longer product life span, and lower overall cost for the patient.

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