

Contact Details

Restorative Department

Tel: **01782 674182**

Monday to Friday 9.00 am to 4.00 pm

Mrs S Wilde, Secretary

Mr S Brindley, Consultant Restorative Dentistry

Miss R Taylor, Hygienist/Therapist

Author: Restorative Department

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Patient Information Leaflet

Dental Implants



**Please speak to a member of staff if you
need this leaflet in large print, braille, audio
or another language**

Introduction

This leaflet provides you with information about dental implants and is a general guide . More detailed information can be provided by your clinician.

What are dental implants?

Dental implants are one of the options for restoring missing teeth. They are made from titanium posts which are surgically inserted into the jaw bones to replace missing teeth.

They can support removable dentures, fixed crowns and bridges.

Their use is dependent on several factors such as :

- General medical health.
- Quality and quantity of bone.
- The gum condition.
- The health of the remaining teeth.
- Proximity to important nerves, blood vessels and sinuses.

What are the benefits?

- To improve appearance
- To improve eating and speech function.
- To preserve the remaining jaw bone.
- Quality of life.

- You may be told that you have insufficient bone, which may require additional surgery such as a bone graft.
- The graft could be taken from your chin, or the wisdom tooth area in your mouth.
- If larger quantities are needed, the graft may be taken from your hip or other sources. The additional bone graft procedure could prolong the overall treatment by 4 to 6 months.

Time scale

The treatment, from the time of placement to completion could take 6 months to over a year. This will be dependant on the bone quality, how healing progresses and if bone grafts were placed.

Please write any questions you have below:

- Appearance can be affected if you have advanced bone and gum recession. This leads to longer looking teeth and dark triangles between adjacent teeth.
- You need to maintain good levels of oral hygiene and care for your implants as you would your natural teeth.
- Smoking can result in delayed healing and potential implant failure. You are advised to stop smoking for this reason before and following completion of treatment.
- Maintenance work or repairs may be necessary from time to time.

Planning your treatment

Your clinician will carry out a thorough examination of your mouth and will ask questions about your general health. This may involve several hospital visits and joint consultations with other specialists.

X- rays will be taken along with impressions to make a mould of your jaw to allow further examination.

Decision making

- The outcome of the planning stages will indicate whether implants are suitable and what alternative treatment is available.
- As implants are more complex, they are generally more expensive.

What can dental implants be used for?

- Patients with congenitally missing teeth.
- Patients with extreme retching difficulties who have difficulty with dentures.
- Loose dentures that cannot be improved conventionally.
- Patients with surgical defects.
- Patients who have a cleft palate.

Are there alternatives to dental implants?

Any options will be discussed with you at your consultation. These may include:

- No treatment as an option.
- Removable denture or 'plate'.
- A 'fixed' bridge.

Implant insertion

- This procedure can be carried out using a local anaesthesia in the dental chair or if necessary can be done under a general anaesthetic in theatre.
- Specialist instruments are used to create a surgical hole or flap through your gum and bone.

- The implant is then inserted into the bone and the gum replaced. This is held together with some dissolvable stitches which can take up to 5 weeks to disappear.
- A follow up appointment will be made with the consultant a few weeks later to check the healing. If necessary, X-rays will be taken.
- The implants will be left for at least 3 months before they are used.
- If you usually wear a removable prosthesis, such as a denture or retainer, you may be asked to leave this out for the first week to help the healing.

Implant exposure:

A second minor surgical procedure usually under local anaesthesia is undertaken following healing.

This exposes the top of the implant and places a healing cap on to the implant.

The gum is then able to re-contour around the implant in preparation for the restorative phase.

Restorative phase

- This requires additional follow-up X-rays and impressions to assess healing.
- Appropriate implant accessory parts will be ordered.

- The number of appointments will depend on whether the space is to be restored with a denture or a bridge.
- Review appointments are made to monitor the implant restoration and underlying bone.

Potential complications

Following surgery there may be some degree of discomfort swelling and bruising.

If you suffer from prolonged and severe pain you should report this to your clinician as these signs may be an early indication of complications.

Implants can be rejected resulting in pain loosening, infections and complete loss of the implant.

Types of implant supported teeth

Implants can support an acrylic removable denture, a fixed bridge or a single crown depending on the clinical situation. Potential problems can include:

- If you grind or clench your teeth, the teeth can crack or break off the bridge or denture.
- Attachment clips within the denture can become loose or break after long term use necessitating the need for repair.