



DENTAL IMPLANTS

it all starts with a smile...

The aim of this information sheet is to help answer some of the questions you may have about having a dental implant. It explains the benefits, risks and alternatives of the procedure as well as what you can expect when you come to the surgery. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak to the dentist or dental nurse caring for you.

What is a dental implant?

Dental implants are artificial replacements for your tooth roots that are placed within the bone of your jaw to help support dentures, crowns (caps) or bridges. Implants should provide you with a long lasting tooth replacement if they are cared for in the same way that the teeth should be cared for.

What happens during the placement of a dental implant?

Treatment is normally divided into two or three stages, each of which may involve several visits to your dentist.

Pre-operative assessment

Before implants can be placed, x-rays and impressions of your mouth will be needed. These allow us to plan the best way to treat you.

Stage one treatment

The next stage of your treatment is to insert the implants. This is normally done under local anaesthetic (an injection which makes the area where we are working numb) by lifting the gum away from the underlying bone, then gently and carefully drilling into the jaw bone. The implant is inserted into the bone and the gum replaced and held together with some stitches. The stitches are removed about a week later.

Following insertion, some types of implant will stick out through the gum, whilst other types will be buried underneath the gum. The implants will usually be left for at least three months before they are used to support replacement teeth. Implants buried under the gum will require a second small surgical procedure to expose them before they can be used.

Restorative treatment

You will need a number of appointments to make your crowns, bridges or denture. This will include taking impressions and checking the fit of the parts used to make your replacement teeth. In total, treatment could extend over six to twelve months.

Your implant treatment will be carried out by a qualified and experienced dentist.



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What are the benefits – why should I have dental implants?

Dental implants can be very useful where we would otherwise have to crown (cap) healthy teeth or where a denture or bridge would be difficult or sometimes impossible because there are no suitable teeth or gums for support.

What are the risks?

There is a small risk that the implants may not fuse properly with the bone in your mouth and so cannot be used. The risk is higher in certain individuals, particularly those who smoke, and you will be advised if we think risk of failure is higher than normal in your case.

Implant placement involves surgery in your mouth and so may be followed by some soreness, swelling, bleeding or bruising. Any discomfort is usually controlled with simple painkillers and should only last a few days.

It is possible for parts of your implants to loosen or wear out with time. This can lead to failure of the implant, or the restoration on the implant, if not treated quickly. You will be responsible for the long term care of your implants, either by seeking care here or more locally.

Some patients who require implants do not have sufficient bone. In these circumstances it may be necessary to carry out a bone graft. This involves more surgery and associated swelling, bruising and pain. The risks of this procedure will be explained to you separately with a bone graft, treatment may take four to six months longer (see our information sheets on bone grafts for more information).

Are there any other alternatives?

The available treatment options will vary a lot from person to person and so will be discussed with you on an individual basis. These may include no treatment, preparing other teeth for crowns or bridges or an alternative design for denture (if possible).

How can I prepare for a dental implant?

Please make sure you have told us about any problems with your health and about any tablets or medicines you are taking. Some medical conditions change the advice and information we need to give you.

If you are a smoker we strongly advise you to quit and remain a non-smoker in the long term. This will significantly reduce the risk of some implant complications. You can contact the **Free** NHS smoking helpline on 0800 022 4 322.

Asking for your consent

We want to involve you in all decisions about your care and treatment. If you decide to go ahead, you will be asked to sign a consent form. This confirms that you agree to have the procedure and understand



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what it involves. You will have received a report to help you decide on your treatment options and our consent policy.

We will inform you about your planned treatment in detail before we start. However, there are times during treatment when we have to change the planned treatment. If this is necessary we will make sure that you are told and give you the choice whether to proceed with the other treatment. If you are having sedation for your treatment, we will discuss all possible alternative treatments with you in advance.

Will I feel any pain?

The level of discomfort is variable and generally only requires painkillers, such as paracetamol or ibuprofen, which are available from your local pharmacy. It is better to take these before the local anaesthesia wears off, at the interval prescribed on the packet, for the first 24 hours.

What happens after the procedure?

If you have had the procedure under local anaesthesia you will be able to leave as soon as the procedure has been completed. You should be able to eat normally after the surgery but a soft diet may be advised by your surgeon. You should avoid alcohol for 24 hours. Implant patients are advised to quit smoking before starting treatment and to remain a non-smoker in the long-term.

What do I need to do after I go home?

You should be able to return to work within a day of your treatment. Occasionally you may not be able to wear your dentures for up to two weeks after the surgery (the dentist or nurse treating you will let you know if this is the case). You will be given more personalised advice following your treatment about looking after your implants.

Will I have a follow-up appointment?

Any dental restorations or dentures based on implants will need regular follow up and occasional maintenance. Your next appointment will be given to you before you leave the surgery. We will expect you to be willing to attend for such care, and for regular checks of the implants themselves.

Who can I contact for more information?

If you have any problems please contact the surgery on 01233 639289. For emergencies outside normal working hours please contact Dr Patel on 07740291647