

DENTAL IMPLANTS

This information is designed to give you information about our implant provision service at The Dental Institute

The lifestyle change which can take place can be quite simply earth shattering. The significant investment must be appropriate to your aspirations, and you should be prepared to make a wholehearted commitment to the treatment and maintenance routines. These factors, and any limitations of treatment procedures should be fully understood before you consider progressing a significant investment in your dental well-being.

Tooth loss affects millions of South Africans. Conventional tooth replacement methods, such as bridges and dentures, are not always the answer for many people due to the frustration and embarrassment created by poor fit or maintenance problems.

Dental implants provide a number of benefits for people seeking alternatives and solutions to the problems created by tooth loss. These benefits include:

- Renewed ability to chew and speak properly
- Restoration of facial aesthetics
- Preservation of remaining jaw bone structure
- Reduction of possible gum problems and infections
- Increased confidence and self-esteem as a result of all of the above

It is our express desire that you should make this positive decision for the right reasons, and in the full knowledge of all your options.

TOOTH BREAKAGE?

IMMEDIATE REPLACEMENT OF IMPLANTS....

It is possible to place an implant at the time of extraction of the natural tooth. This presents the advantage of minimizing any delay before a final restoration is in place, although it places some pressure upon the planning process. This approach lends itself particularly nearer the front of the mouth and where only one or two teeth are a problem.

OR DEFERRED PLACEMENT...

More commonly, a deferment period of some 6-8 weeks follows the extraction of a tooth before an implant can be placed. Often this will allow any infection that may have been present in the jaw bone to heal.

OR PLACEMENT INTO AN OLD SPACE...

It is often the case that you may have had a space or spaces for many years. Subject to the volume of remaining jaw bone, it is a matter of routine nowadays to place implants at these sites. If the jaw bone is lacking a process of adding to it may need to be undertaken.

ADDITION TO THE BONE...

In a process called 'Ridge Augmentation' a shortage of bone can be overcome using a variety of materials, which can either be placed at the time of the implant placement or as a separate procedure. **This complicating factor is not covered in these details.** There will be some circumstances in which we would advise the expert skills of an oral surgeon to supplement our own planned procedures.

THE PROCESS

THE IMPLANT TEAM

Success with dental implants is achieved through working with a team of professionals. The skills of the restorative dentist and oral and maxillofacial surgeon combine to establish an integrated treatment plan that will provide efficient and effective care and ensure optimum function.

FIRST VISIT - FEASIBILITY

This will be the same as any other new patient consultation. During this visit the whole procedure will be explained and any questions answered.

DETAILED PLANNING - MULTIPLE IMPLANTS

This will involve the taking of a detailed history, 3-D stone casts, surveying of the implant site(s), construction of plastic placement guides, planning of final restorations, and a pre-operative rehearsal of the likely result on the stone casts called a 'Diagnostic Wax-up'. You can begin to visualize the end result at this point. A firm fee indication will also be issued.

The fees for the planning phase remain payable if you should decide at that point not to proceed.

THE THREE STAGES

STAGE I- PLACING THE ANCHOR SCREWS

The first surgery involves the placing of anchors into the jaw bone. These anchors are usually made of the metal Titanium which, through a process called "osseointegration," forms a biological bond with the living bone. During this "same day" surgery, the patient will be sedated and then given anesthesia. The procedure may take several hours. After surgery, home care instructions will be given along with prescriptions for an antibiotic and pain medication. The osseointegration process will take from three to six months. Routine follow-up visits will be scheduled to monitor healing.

STAGE II- ATTACHING THE ABUTMENT CONNECTORS

The second surgery in the implant process will place the abutments, or connectors, onto the anchors. This is done when osseointegration is complete and the anchors are firmly held in the jaw bone. Stage II surgery is much shorter, usually taking less than an hour. It ordinarily takes a few days for the gums to heal once the abutments are in place. A follow-up visit will be scheduled a few days after surgery to make sure the gums are healing properly.

STAGE III- MAKING YOUR NEW TEETH

The final phase is the actual mounting or loading of the artificial teeth onto the abutment posts, a precision process that requires meticulous attention to detail by the restorative dentist.

CONCLUSION

Successful dental implants depend on the contribution of each member of the team. The surgeon prepares the jaw and installs the implants, the restorative dentist makes and fits the prostheses, and most importantly, the patient provides the commitment and discipline necessary for the long-term maintenance of the new teeth.

We want you to have as full understanding of how this aspect of modern dentistry can dramatically change your life if you are used to a denture, or can allow you to avoid a sense of inevitability should you be considering a denture.