

# Implants



## What are implants?

Implants are a long-term fixed restorative option for patients who are missing teeth. They involve placing a titanium screw into the mouth and attaching a crown that is designed to match your existing teeth. They are individually fixed directly to the underlying bone and as such can act as a separate tooth.



## How do implants work?

Implants are designed to act similar to natural teeth. The titanium screw replaces the root of the tooth while the crown replaces the tooth itself. They are fixed into place and not easily removable. Once in place, implants may last you many years, often a lifetime provided that you take care of it. This procedure is performed under local anaesthetic, so discomfort should be minimal during the procedure. Once the implant has integrated into the bone and become stable (this occurs after 16-24 weeks), the implant crown is then attached to the tooth, restoring your smile.

## Am I suitable for implants?

Implants are suitable for a wide range of individuals. There are a few factors that can influence your suitability for implants and these areas must be investigated prior to commencement of the implant procedure. These are:

1. Bone → there must be sufficient bone present in which to place the implant. This is determined by a 3D scan called an ICAT. There are a few situations that can influence the underlying bone and decrease your suitability for implants. Firstly, periodontal disease influences the underlying bone and supporting structures. This support is crucial for the success of the implant. Secondly, areas which have been missing teeth for many years will also have suffered significant bone loss. Depending upon the situation, bone augmentation (building additional bone) may be required.
2. Healthy oral environment → the surrounding teeth and gums should be healthy and free of infection or disease. If there are infections present or signs of periodontal disease, your dentist will recommend delaying the procedure until these issues have been dealt with. If periodontal disease is present, it can affect the implant, similar to how it affects the tooth. If any infections are present in the mouth, the implant has an increased risk of becoming infected and the success of implant integration reduces.
3. Smoking → Ideally you should not smoke. Smoking increases the risk of post-procedure complications including infections and delays healing.
4. Medical conditions → Certain medical conditions, such as Diabetes Mellitus can delay healing and increase the risk of the implant failing. Furthermore, anti-resorptive medications, such as Bisphosphonates or Prolia, can also influence bone healing post-procedure. If you have any medical conditions, it is important to let your dentist know because this can influence your suitability for treatment and long-term success greatly.

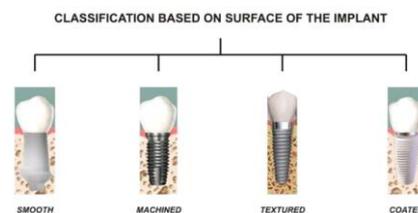
## What are alternatives for implants?

If you are not suitable for implants, there are two main alternatives. A removable partial denture is the first option. This is a removable prosthesis that clips into your mouth to replace your teeth. You

take it out at night to allow the underlying gum tissue to breath and recover from wearing the prosthesis. The second option is a bridge. This is a fixed alternative to implants, however, there are limitations to the number of teeth that can be replaced. If you are interested in either of these options, please discuss this with your dentist prior to beginning the implant process.

### **Are all implants the same?**

There are many different brands, shapes and sizes of implants available. Based on the information collected during your examination and consultation appointments, your dentist will determine the most suitable type of implant for you. All implants used are of surgical grade titanium and have passed stringent guidelines before they are available for use in Australia. Depending upon the country, these stringent guidelines may not be followed elsewhere.



### **Do implants always work? How long will my implant last?**

Implants do have a high success rate. The success rate is approximately 95% after 10 years. With any medical or dental procedure, there is always a risk that it will not work. For implants this is often related to a failure of osteointegration, which occurs within the first few months. If an implant fails, there are a few options. The procedure may be reattempted using a larger implant and increased bone structure. Alternately, other options such as a removable prosthesis or bridge may be performed. If an implant fails, it is usually not the fault of the dentist, but is an unfortunate risk associated with the treatment.

### **How do I look after my implant?**

Once the implant has integrated into the bone, the risk of the failure is quite small, less than 5%. However, you do need to ensure that you are cleaning your implant well to increase its longevity. Cleaning, both at home and regularly at the dentist at least every 6 months, ensures that any bacteria present around the implant is removed thereby reducing the risk of infection. It also allows for the neighbouring teeth and gums to be cleaned and any signs of infection or disease can then be detected early and treated to reduce the risk of any long-term complications. If any of these issues do occur, they can easily spread to the implant and cause failure. Furthermore, if you have periodontal disease, this can easily affect your implant, causing bone loss and subsequent failure. It is advisable to address these issues immediately to minimise the risk of infection causing problems with your implant.

Additionally, the prosthesis that has been placed over the implant is also subject to wear and tear. Any of the following conditions require immediate attention by your dentist:

1. Feeling mobility of the implant
2. Clicking or metallic snap while eating
3. Breaking a piece of the prosthesis
4. Redness or swelling of the gum tissue around the implant
5. Feeling of the bite being different
6. Pain

We do our best to provide you the highest quality service possible, however, the continuing success of the implant and prosthesis is up to you. If you are considering an implant, please ensure that you plan to;

1. Visit us for examination, cleaning and polishing at least every 6 months or as your dentist recommends
2. Brush your teeth twice per day, floss and clean properly around the implant and crown site.

## **What is all All-on-4?**

Unlike removable dentures, All-on-4 dental implants are a permanent solution for a healthier smile. In some cases All-on-4 lets you replace your dentures straight away, without the lengthy procedure for conventional implants.

All-on-4 dental implants are a whole set of teeth that are supported by at least 4 implants. The final fixed prosthesis, with 10-14 teeth is attached to the titanium implants. Once placed, the teeth will look, feel and function in a similar way to your natural teeth.

The final prosthesis can be made from either zirconia, acrylic on titanium or resin. Resin is the cheapest option however it will also need replacing more often. Your dentist will discuss the material which is best suited for you at your consultation.

In some cases we can place 2 implants in the lower jaw and use a removable prosthesis which reduced the cost. We are happy to discuss this with you if it is suitable.

## **How are we different?**

You do need to be careful when choosing a dentist to place your implants. While All-on-4 started as a branded product, it is now offered by practices all over Australia. Some practice will offer the treatment over 2-3 days however it is not physically possible to actually achieve this. You also want to make sure your final prosthesis is a custom made final product, not a relined or retrofitted temporary prosthesis. Implants need time to heal and integrate into the bone so they are stable. The bone and gum tissue also takes time to settle especially if teeth are extracted at the time that the implants are placed. This process usually takes 10-16 weeks. Placing a crown or fixed prosthesis on implants that have not yet integrated means there is higher risk of implant failure. Generally in All-on-4 cases in the upper jaw, we advise placing the implants and using a removable denture while the healing and integration takes place. About 3-4 months after the implants are placed, we then place the final custom made, fixed prosthesis. The bone in the upper jaw is often quite soft and may also require grafting so if primary stability can't be achieved at the time of placement, the safest option is to allow the implants to heal before loading them with crowns. The bone in the lower jaw is usually much harder and in some cases primary stability can be achieved so it is safe to place a temporary fixed prosthesis.

## **At Anzac Avenue Dental:-**

- We use titanium implants - not mini implants.
- We will often place 6 implants in the upper jaw instead of 4 (although you only pay for 4) as this improves long term success.
- We use an advanced digital planning process and custom surgical guides to improve accuracy and reduce risk.
- We value safety and long term stability over instant results.
- We don't reline or retrofit your temporary prosthesis – we have our Queensland based lab make your new final prosthesis once the gums and bone have healed.
- Our dentists have been successfully placing and restoring implants for more than 20 years.