

Implants



What are implants?

Missing teeth can be one of the most obvious and embarrassing problems for many people. Traditionally missing teeth were replaced with dentures or plates that were often ill-fitting or caused pain. Anzac Avenue Dental can offer you a remarkable alternative that will give you back a 'normal tooth'. Implants are a long term solution to missing teeth. They involve placing a titanium screw into the mouth and attaching a crown that is designed to exactly match your natural teeth. This procedure is done using 'the wand' local anaesthetic and most patients experience little or no discomfort either during or after the procedure. Implants are a fantastic option for people who care about their smile and want a long term alternative to plates and dentures.

How do they work?

Implants are designed to act as a "natural" tooth. The titanium screw replaces the root of the tooth and the crown replaces the tooth itself. They are fixed in place and are not easily removable. Once in place, an implant should last for life providing you look after it.

How are they placed?

The titanium implant is screwed into the jaw bone under local anaesthetic, so you won't feel any discomfort during the procedure. In most cases the gum is closed over so you can't see the implant. The jaw bone takes 16-24 weeks to grow around the implant and stabilise it in place. Once the implant is stable and has integrated into the bone, the implant is exposed and an abutment (joining piece) is placed onto the implant. The crown or false tooth is then attached.

Can anybody have an implant?

Implants are generally suitable for anybody, however your dentist will require several things before the implant can be placed.

- There must be sufficient bone present in which to place the implant. This is determined with an i-CAT scan. Severe periodontal disease is one condition which can cause bone loss and make an implant unsuitable. Areas where teeth than have been missing for many years may have also suffered significant bone loss. In situation like this, bone grafting many be an option.
- The surrounding teeth and gums must be healthy and free from periodontal infection. If there is any infection present, your dentist may recommend delaying the procedure until this has been treated. Infection reduces the chance of the implant integrating successfully.
- Ideally you should not smoke. Smoking increases the chance of post procedure infection and delayed healing time.
- Some medical conditions such as diabetes can also delay healing time and increase the risk of the implant failing and some medications can also affect bone healing.

What are the alternatives to an implant?

A bridge or partial denture can also replace the missing teeth, however many people find these options uncomfortable or difficult to look after.

Are all implants the same?

No. There are a number of different brands and shapes of implants available. Your dentist will determine the most suitable type of implants based on the information they obtain from your i-CAT scan. All implants that we use are made from a surgical grade titanium and have passed stringent guidelines before they are available for use in Australia. We are unable to guarantee the quality or safety of implants that are placed overseas.

Do implants always work?

In most cases, yes. However as with any medical or dental treatment, there is always a slight risk that it may not work. Implants fail in about 5% of cases and this is usually related to the implant not integrating into the bone and becoming stable. If this occurs, it may be possible to repeat the procedure using a larger implant, or to graft some bone into the site to increase the amount of bone present. If an implant fails, it is usually not the fault of your dentist, it is an unfortunate risk associated with any treatment.

Looking after your implant

Once the implant has integrated into the bone, it is unlikely to fail, however it can occur. It is important that correct cleaning instruments are used during preventive care visits to prevent bacteria from "sitting on" the implant screw. It is also important to ensure that adjacent teeth and gum tissues do not become infected. Once infection occurs near the site of an implant, there is a risk of bone loss and subsequent implant failure. If you have periodontal disease or a tooth that requires root treatment, it is advisable to address this straight away to minimise the risk of the infection causing a problem with your implant.

Additionally, the prosthesis that have been placed over the implants are subject to wear and/or breakage. Any of the following conditions that occur require your immediate attention.

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

We will do our best to provide to you the highest quality service available, however the continuing success of the implant and prosthesis is up to you. If you are considering having a implants placed, please make sure that you plan to:-

- Visit us for examination, scaling, and polishing at least once every six months.
- Brush you teeth twice a day as normal, making sure that you also clean around the implant and crown site.