

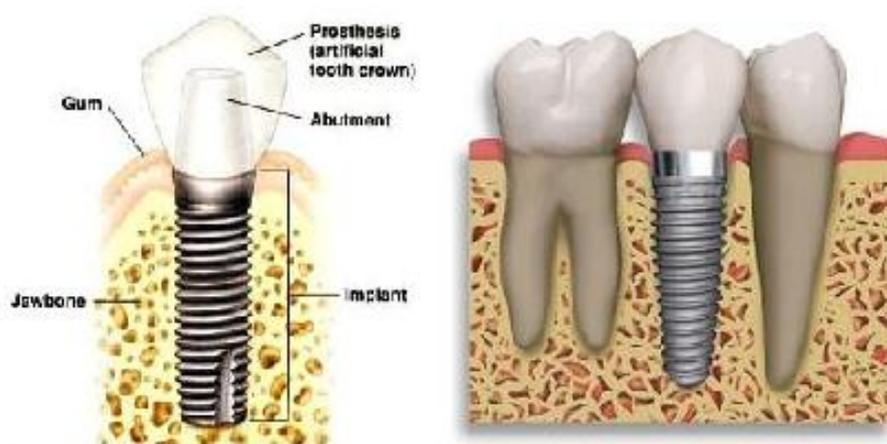
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# Dental Implant Treatment

**What is a dental implant?**



A dental implant is an artificial tooth-root made up of titanium which unites with your jaw bone and is used to replace missing teeth or can even support dentures. It looks and feels just like a natural tooth. The implant is connected to the implant crown through a middle structure called the abutment.

**Can anyone have implants?**

Most people have sufficient bone for implant placement. A specialised 3 Dimensional Radiograph is used to assess the volume and quality of bone prior to surgery. Occasionally an additional procedure is required to obtain extra bone prior to implant placement.

**What are the benefits?**

You are having an independent tooth placed in your mouth that does not rely on any other teeth for support. When a single implant is placed, you can floss around it just like a natural tooth and implants cannot decay.

## **How is it done?**

Implants can be placed as one or two stage procedures. During the one stage procedure, the implant is placed and the healing cap is left exposed to the outside. During a two stage surgical procedure, the implant is covered by the gum and is only uncovered 2-3 months later. Sometimes implants can be placed with a temporary crown all in one appointment. This is called an immediate implant.

## **Is it painful?**

Most implant placement is more comfortable than having a surgical tooth extraction. In most cases, implant surgery is straight forward and is usually done in the chair using local anaesthetic.

## **What are the possible complications?**

Strict infection control protocols ensure that implants are placed in the optimal environment. Antibiotics are given prior and after surgery. Success rates for implant surgery vary between 95% and 98 %. In the unlikely event of an implant failing to integrate with the bone, another implant can be placed at a later stage. Occasionally swelling does occur after the surgery but pain is very uncommon. Other unlikely complications may occur but these are assessed and discussed on an individual basis, related to the proposed position of the implant.

## **Can I still wear my bridge or denture while undergoing implant treatment?**

In most cases you should be able to wear your temporary denture. Sometimes a temporary bridge is also constructed prior to the surgery.

## **Costs of treatment**

Implants are more expensive than removable dentures. However in the long term they are more comfortable and cost effective.

The cost of implant treatment varies depending on the number of implants placed and components used. Provision of good quality surgery requires the use of numerous disposable equipment and drapes for stringent infection control protocols.

As a guide, the cost of implant surgery is \$3400.00 and the cost of the implant abutment and the implant crown is \$3400.00. The cost of a bone graft when required is extra. Additional costs would be incurred when a temporary bridge or denture is required. Not all cases require temporary solutions and these costs can be discussed on a case by case basis.

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## **POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOLLOWING IMPLANT SURGERY**

- Avoid alcohol and excessive physical activity in the first 2 days. Do not smoke for the first 3 days. Exercise can be resumed gradually when you feel up to it.
  
- Have an ice pack ready at home - frozen peas are ideal. Immediately after the surgery, ice packs should be used to minimise swelling. Apply to the outside of the face as often as possible for the first 24 hours. Swelling will be at its maximum on the second day following the surgery. External gentle heat should be used to prevent the possibility of any bruising and/or swelling on days 2 and 3.
  
- Maintain a good food and fluid intake. Eat soft foods and drink plenty of liquids for the first 24 hours.
  
- Do not place direct pressure in the area of surgery by chewing on it. If we have placed a temporary tooth or bridge, it is important to be gentle with what you eat in the first few weeks.
  
- Rinse with Savacol mouthwash after meals, 2-3 times a day, holding it in the area of the surgery, undiluted for at least 1 minute. After eating rinse with warm salty water.
  
- Even with stitches in place, you may find some oozing from the surgical site, which is completely normal. It can help to prop yourself up with an extra pillow before going to bed.
  
- Take medication as directed. For pain relief take Panadol or Panadeine Forte as directed. **Do not** take Aspirin or Nurofen as it will delay healing. You will be given a script for an antibiotic and analgesic, that you can get filled at your local chemist/pharmacy. It is important that you take the full course of antibiotics until finished.