

DENTAL IMPLANTS THE BASIC PROCEDURE

What exactly is an implant?

A natural tooth has a crown; the part which shows above the gum, and a root; the anchor hidden below the gum.

When a tooth is missing, a dental implant takes the place of the missing root and a prosthetic crown replaces the natural crown.

The Implant Procedure

The implant procedure is the same whether one or all teeth are missing. In this example, there is only one missing lower tooth. For the purpose of demonstration we will assume the patient is healthy and is a candidate for this procedure.

Implant Site Preparation

The gum tissue is opened to expose the bone area where the implant will be placed. In situations where there is insufficient bone structure, bone grafting may be a recommended procedure.

Once healthy bone material has been established, a special drill is used to prepare the bone to receive the implant.

Placing the Implant

After the bone has been prepared, the implant is placed and the tissue is sutured. The sutures are typically removed, seven to fourteen days after surgery.

The Healing Process - Osseointegration

The healing process takes three to six months. This is the amount of time it usually takes the implant to become part of the lower jaw, commonly referred to as osseointegration.

Attaching the Post

When the gum tissue is ready, a special post is attached to the implant. It is the support for the new porcelain crown.

Today's technologies often include zirconium abutments attached to the implant post, to assure that the new porcelain tooth possesses translucency properties similar to a natural tooth.

Placing the Crown

After impressions are taken a crown is made and shaded to match your existing teeth. The crown is then slipped over the post and cemented.

The Completed Implant

The final prosthetic crown appears as a natural tooth.

Applications of Implant Dentistry

In many cases, dental implants are incorporated into an overall treatment plan that might focus on the replacement of several teeth.

Some patients have the option of replacing each affected tooth with a new implant, depending upon the condition of bone material.

Other treatment plans may recommend implants for anchoring bridges and dentures.

