

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS about dental implants

Are all implants successful?

There are many variables to be considered in placing an implant.

1. The patient must be healthy. There must be adequate healing powers present in the patient. For example, if the patient is an uncontrolled diabetic, inconsistent healing could complicate the procedure. If such a condition develops at a later date after the implant(s) has been done, this too may complicate the future of the implant(s).
2. An accurate diagnosis must be made and the proper implant placement and procedure must be selected for the individual patient.
3. The implant(s) must be treated properly by the patient and the dentist. If either person is neglectful, there could be complications.
4. If the patient is a heavy smoker or an excessive alcoholic beverage consumer, the success of the implant(s) will be affected.

Will implants last a lifetime?

Some implants have been in the mouth for over thirty years. The average expectancy is based upon numerous variables, such as the patient's health and proper maintenance.

Is age a deterrent?

No! Health is the determining factor. Many seventy and eighty year olds are a better surgical risk than someone years younger with poor general health. Older individuals are more likely to need implants because they have lost more teeth, and have lost more of supporting ridges.

Does the body reject implants?

Implants are made of biologically compatible materials that have undergone extensive testing over a period of many years. Since these materials are metals, such as titanium, and have never been living tissue, there is no likelihood of causing an antigen-antibody response, which could cause rejection similar to that, which sometimes occurs with heart and kidney transplants.

Is there a risk of cancer?

There is no instance reported in the dental or medical literature of dental implants being the cause of a cancer.

Are dental implants used for cosmetic purposes?

Dental implants are not usually inserted for cosmetic purposes. The primary objective of dental implants is to give additional support to replacement teeth. Cosmetic enhancement is possible with replacement teeth however your expectations should be fully discussed prior to treatment.

Is there a guarantee?

There is no way that we can guarantee anything which goes in the mouth and which is under control of the individual patient. Doctors do not tell their patients that the transplanted heart, kidney or coronary bypass will keep them alive for any specified period of time. We can only tell you that we will strive to help care for your implant(s) at home, and will be available for regular periodic follow-up appointment to evaluate your continued dental health. We will do everything we can to make the implant(s) succeed, but you will have to make the same commitment.

Is it expensive?

Implant procedures, which vary in complexity and extent depending on the patient's dental condition and requirements, can involve a significant investment. A survey of 350 patients after completion of their treatment revealed that not only was it worth the investment, but that they would happily do it again.

Will insurance pay for implants?

Some dental procedures, implant surgeries, and portions of implants are covered by dental and medical insurance policies. Always check with the insurance company in writing.

Will there be discomfort?

Just as with any surgery, there can be some pain. However, anaesthetics and sedation virtually eliminate discomfort during the surgery. Post-operative pain will be similar to that of having teeth removed. Patients will be provided with medication to alleviate this discomfort.

How much time does it take?

It depends on your condition and needs, and the extent of the work involved. Individual operations may take from one half-hour to several hours. There may be as one operation, or a series of operations and follow-up visits, which would be scheduled over a period of months to ensure proper healing. The specifics of timing must be considered in the consent letter.

How long will I be off work?

Generally, we recommend the day of surgery, plus the following day or two off for recovery. You can expect to have some swelling, pain (discomfort), possibly some bruising, but at no time will you be without teeth. The time taken off work is really an individual decision. Patients should avoid flying for the first two weeks.