

Are Dental Implants for You?

A dental implant is a "root" device, usually made of titanium, used in dentistry to support restorations that resemble a tooth or group of teeth to replace missing teeth. A typical implant consists of a titanium screw (resembling a tooth root) with a roughened or smooth surface. The majority of dental implants are made out of commercially pure titanium, which is available in 4 grades depending upon the amount of carbon and iron contained.



They are used for the support and retention of dentures, fixed bridgework and the replacement of one or more missing teeth.

Virtually all dental implants placed today are root-form endosseous implants, i.e., they appear similar to an actual tooth root (and thus possess a "root-form"). They are placed within the jaw bone and become attached to surrounding jaw bone. The bone of the jaw accepts and osseointegrates with the titanium post.



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Osseointegration refers to the fusion of the implant surface with the surrounding bone. Dental implants will fuse with bone, however they lack the periodontal ligament, so they will feel slightly different than natural teeth do during chewing functions.

The implants remain rigid rather than have some flexibility that natural teeth have because they are attached individually to a periodontal ligament.

Prior to the advent of root-form endosseous implants, most implants were either blade endosseous implants, in that the shape of the metal piece placed within the bone resembled a flat blade, or sub-periosteal implants, in which a framework was constructed to lie upon and was attached with screws to the exposed bone of the jaws.

Dental implants can be used to support a number of dental prostheses, including crowns, implant-supported bridges or dentures. They can also be used as anchorage for orthodontic tooth movement. The use of dental implants permits un-directional tooth movement without reciprocal action.

You should know that not every person may be a candidate for receiving a dental implant. There has to be enough supporting bone present particularly in the upper jaw that is in such close proximity to the maxillary sinus. You also must have good oral hygiene and be in good general health.

That being said, certain invasive surgical procedures can be implemented like bone grafts, or bone augmentations and/or sinus lifts to provide enough bone. One obvious contra-indication for implants is placing them in the lower jaw too close or touching to the mandibular canal which has the mandibular nerve running through it.

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