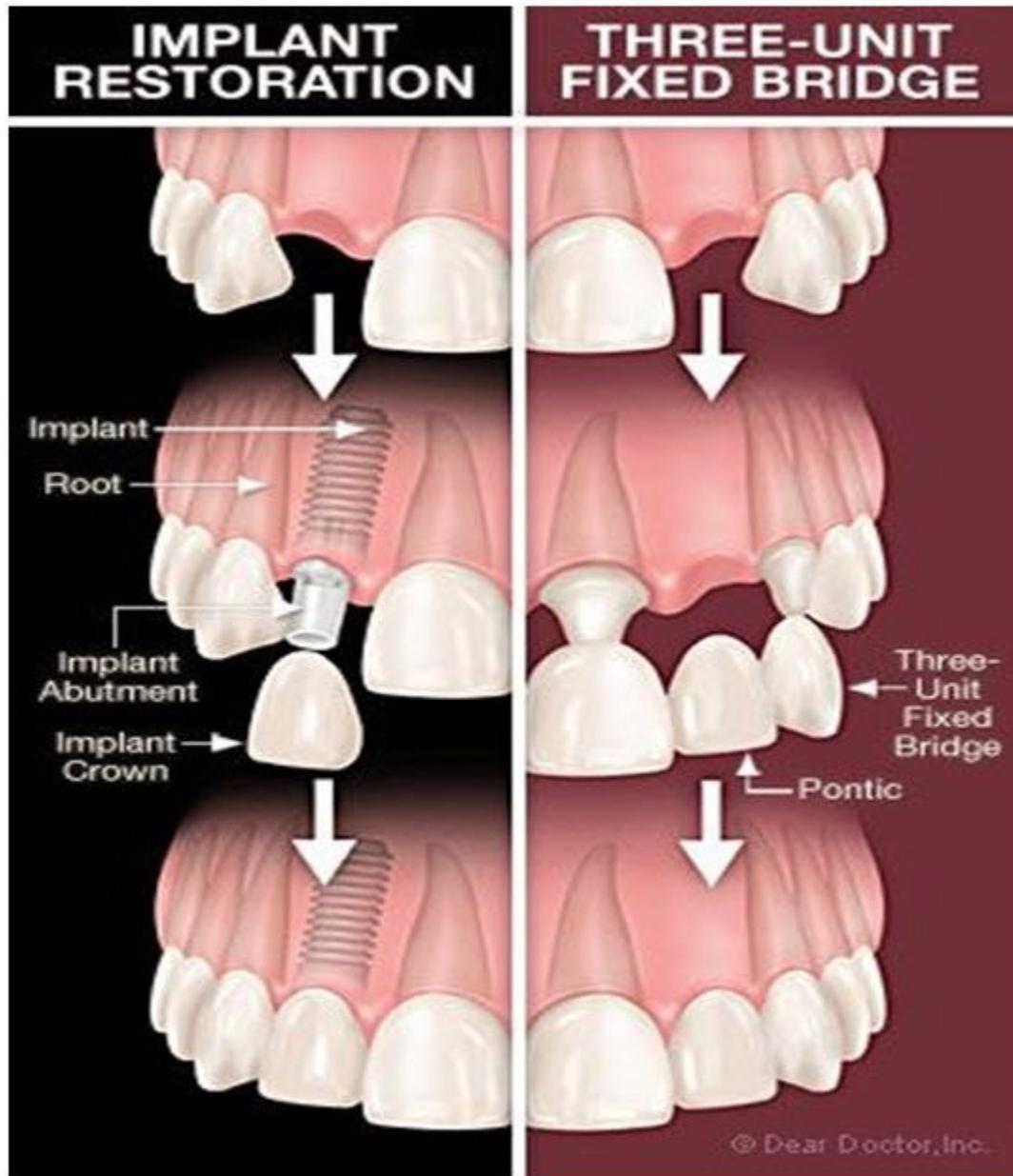




DENTAL IMPLANT vs 3 UNIT BRIDGE ILLUSTRATION



Dental Implants- The ideal way to replace lost teeth

Like most precious things in life, the importance of teeth is only realised when they are gone. An otherwise natural and simple activity like eating becomes a tedious task often culminating in one unwillingly but inevitably making dietary changes. One ends up not eating what one likes, resigning rather to what one can chew. With loss of front teeth, the speech is a childlike lisp whose accompanying 'gross' showers of saliva would make one's listeners wish for raincoats. The Loss of back teeth results in one's cheeks sinking in and the lower jaw swinging upwards and forwards; give such a person broom and dark garb and they would doubtlessly scoop the witch's role for a screenplay. Such are

the consequences of edentulous (loss of teeth) that it is little wonder humanity has (from the earliest civilizations) sought to replace lost teeth.

In contemporary times, missing teeth have traditionally been replaced by two main ways, namely, removable dentures and 'fixed' bridges. Removable dentures are tooth bearing appliances that are worn and removed by the patient. The main plate on which the artificial teeth are attached can be plastic(acrylic) or metal. Removable dentures are quite affordable but the fact that they are not fixed has a psychological undesirability to it, notwithstanding the altering of speech and the potential inadvertent "falling out" that may occur -an old patient of mine who lost her dentures during a church baptism ceremony comes to mind. These also need regular adjustments as the tooth -bearing part of the jaw bone shrinks in the absence of teeth. Bridges evolved to offer a fixed way of replacing teeth by attaching the artificial teeth to the existing ones. It is therefore required that one has healthy and appropriately positioned natural teeth. The necessary trimming of these natural teeth to bear the artificial ones may be objectionable. It may also be of doubtful prudence to entrust more complex and hard-to- clean teeth to someone who most likely lost their original teeth from 'shoddy' oral hygiene practices. It behooves a patient with a bridge to practice a higher standard of oral hygiene otherwise the supporting teeth would succumb to disease and the whole bridge would crumble. Dental implants have rapidly advanced over the past 40 years and offer a way of replacing teeth that is most ideal. I shall discuss dental implants in greater details under subtopics.

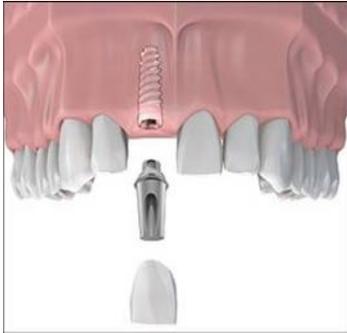


A single dental implant case.

Picture #1

An animated image of the case.

Notice: the implant already in the jaw bone, the abutment that will be mounted on the implant and finally the implant tooth will be built around the abutment.



Picture #2

The dental implant is placed in the jaw bone and revealed after a few months. In this case during the dental implant surgery the dentist placed a healing cap immediately. During the healing of the gums the gingiva formed a nice shape around the healing cap. This will enable an esthetic finish when placing the final restored tooth.



Picture #3

The abutment is connected to the dental implant.



Picture #4

The final result a beautiful restored dental implant tooth. Notice how the gingiva surrounds the tooth perfectly making it impossible to notice that this is a false tooth!



What are dental implants?

A dental implant is a safe, aesthetic way to replace missing teeth. Because Implant restorations look and feel more like natural teeth, they offer new levels of comfort, security and confidence over these traditional treatments.

How do they work?

A dental implant is a small "anchor" made of titanium (mostly) that is inserted into the jawbone to take the place of your missing tooth root. After Osseo integration (when the surrounding bone has healed fixing the implant), a replacement tooth is secured to the top of the implant. This new tooth looks, feels and performs similar to your natural teeth.

What are the benefits?

Choosing dental implant as a treatment option can offer you a number of significant advantages

- **MAINTAINING ANATOMY**

As alluded to earlier on, if you have missing teeth, the bone begins to shrink over time. Unhealthy bone loss can make your jaw line recede and change your facial structure. Dental implants can help prevent deterioration of the jawbone so your face retains the natural shape.

- **KEEP YOUR HEALTHY TEETH**

A better long term alternative to bridgework, dental implants eliminate the need to grind down healthy teeth when replacing one or more adjacent teeth. Your own natural healthy teeth are not compromised.

- **SECURITY**

Securely anchored dental implants do not slip or move. This eliminates some of the key problems of dentures, including poor fit, gum irritation and pain from exposed nerve. The result is superior in comfort, reliability, and there is freedom from embarrassment.

What is involved in the implant procedure?

The dental implant process involves several steps that take place over a time period that averages from 2 to 4 months.

The typical process will include:

- **PRE-TREATMENT CONSULTATION**

After a careful evaluation of your dental and medical health history, your practitioner will determine if you are a good candidate for dental implants.

- **INITIAL IMPLANT PLACEMENT**

Your practitioner places the dental implant into your jaw while you are under either local or general anesthesia. Over a period, bone will heal to the surface of the implant, anchoring it into position. Depending on your particular case, an additional minor procedure creates an opening through which your artificial tooth will emerge.

- **IMPLANT PROSTHETIC PLACEMENT**

During this phase, your practitioner painlessly attaches a prosthetic "post" to the implant. An impression will be taken, and soon after, an artificial replacement tooth will be created for a natural restoration.

- **PROPER MAINTENANCE**

Your dental practitioner will guide you on the proper care and maintenance of your implants before, during and after the procedure. By following a regular routine of careful oral hygiene and regular checkups, your implants can look, function and feel great for many years to come.