

Dental Implants

What are dental implants?

Dental implants are artificial; the implant is essentially a rod that is rooted into the jawbone to support the cosmetic replacements (crowns, dentures or bridges).

Who can benefit from having dental implants?

Individual's who have lost one or a lot of teeth may wish to consider having dental implants. This may be due to gum disease and decay, injury to the mouth and alternatively to stabilize dentures. Dental implants are fast becoming a popular treatment as they root the artificial tooth to the gum, keeping it secure.

Procedure

Patients are usually placed under a local anesthetic during the dental implant procedure. An incision is made in the gum, which is then lifted and a hole drilled into the jawbone where the implant will sit. The dental implant (made from titanium) is then fitted into the hole, and the gum sewn back up. Sometimes a bone graft from the patient may be required to help the implant bond to the gum, which may take up to a few months depending on which part of the jaw has been implanted. Sutures will be removed around 7-10 days following dental implant surgery.

Recovery period

Once the implant has been fitted and the gum healed, the crown, bridge or dentures can then be fitted to the dental implants. This will probably be between 4-6 weeks after your initial surgery. If you are in any discomfort, you may be given antibiotics or painkillers to alleviate the pain. You will be given instructions on what you can eat and how to keep the area clean.

Risks

There is a small risk that the implant will not bond with the gum and become loose. If this happens the initial implant will be removed and the wound left to heal, after which you can undergo a second dental implant surgery. Other possible complications include bleeding, infection, damage to the sinuses, nerves or nasal cavity.