



Bedford Dental Centre Newsletter

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We Welcome New Patients

Dental Implant Treatment at the Bedford Dental Centre

Please ask for a consult if you have any further questions about dental implant therapy.

What are Dental Implants?

A dental implant is a titanium “screw” which is placed into the jawbone, acting as the root of a missing tooth or teeth. The dental implant is then restored with a crown in a similar manner as traditional crowns in dentistry. If the span of missing teeth is larger than a single tooth, multiple implants may be placed and restored with an implant-supported bridge or denture.

Dental implants are in the shape of a hollow screw with both an internal and external thread. They are made of commercially pure titanium, a metal which has been found to be well tolerated by the body. What makes implants successful is an intimate contact between the bone of the jaw and the titanium of the implants. This is called *osseointegration*. To achieve predictable osseointegration we place implants only into bone which is broad enough and high enough to totally encompass them.

Why should I consider dental implants?

Dental implants have been predictably and successfully used in dentistry for over 20 years. The innovative concept in implant dentistry is that we do not rely on your current teeth to support the crown, bridge or denture. Implants are their own freestanding structures. In this way, in most cases, none of your teeth need to be modified to accept the restoration. In some cases where back teeth are missing, the only other option for tooth replacement is a partial denture. If you don't want something removable, implants would be your best choice. Also, if you currently have a complete upper or lower denture which is bothersome and embarrassing because it does not stay in place, implants can be used to create a new, retentive design for your denture!

Who can have dental implants?

Almost anyone can have dental implant therapy. To decide whether or not a person is suitable for implants we look at the patient's overall health and their prosthetic situation.

If you are currently in good health, with any disease process under control and you are a non-smoker, you are most likely a good candidate for dental implants. We do place dental implants in patients who smoke, however, the patient must understand that smoking after dental implants are placed significantly reduces the success of osseointegration, or fusion of the implant to the bone.

Next, we must look at the patient's prosthetic situation. This consists of an evaluation of the size of the patient's span of missing teeth, bone quantity and quality in the area of missing teeth, and the status of the opposing teeth (the teeth the implant-supported crowns will bite against). Radiographs (x-rays) will be needed to determine the quality and quantity of bone in the area.

In the upper jaw, care must be taken to assess the size and location of the sinuses in relation to the proposed sites for the implants. Implants cannot be placed into the sinuses. If there is not enough bone in the area of the sinuses to place implants,

very routine bone grafting can be done to increase the bone level for implant placement. This bone is usually taken from another area in your mouth, where it will grow back.

In the lower jaw, we must look at the position of a large nerve that runs from the back of the jaw to about the corner of the mouth. Every effort is made to avoid contact with this nerve because of the possibility of altered sensation.

What is the process like?

There are four main phases of treatment:

1. Diagnosis and treatment planning
2. Stage I Surgery- placement of the dental implants
3. Stage II Surgery- uncovering of the implants
4. Construction of the replacement crown, bridge or denture

Diagnosis and treatment planning is when we do a complete examination including x-rays and study models to decide if there is enough bone to place implants, how many implants and where to place them. This stage may involve a visit to the surgeon who will be placing the implants.

Stage I surgery involves the placement of the implants into the jawbone. This process is usually much easier and more controlled than having the extractions! You will be awake and able to communicate while the implants are being placed. We use normal “freezing” during placement. We can also arrange for you to have a sedative if you wish to help you relax during the procedure. An incision is made through the tissue overlying the bone in the area for the implants. This tissue is retracted slightly so the surgeon can gain access to the bone. After the implants are inserted, a small screw is placed in the implant to cover it. Then the tissue is put back in place with small stitches. The whole process, depending on how many implants are placed, can take anywhere from half an hour to 2 hours.

Stage II Surgery involves uncovering the implant to prepare it for restoration with a crown, bridge or denture. This second stage is 4-6 months after Stage I surgery to allow for solid healing between the bone and the implants. It is less complicated and much shorter than Stage I surgery. During the 4-6 months when the implants are covered you will not see the implants at all. After Stage II surgery you will either see a titanium healing cylinder or a

temporary crown in your mouth, depending on the case.

Construction of the replacement crown, bridge or denture can begin 3-4 weeks after Stage II surgery. We like to wait until the soft tissues have healed before beginning the prosthetic work.

Are there any risks or complications involved?

As with any other surgery or major restoration, there are always certain risks or potential complications involved.

- i) Implant failure: In very few cases, for unknown reasons, the implant may not “take” to the bone. The rate of success for the Branemark implants we use is very high, but not 100%, like any other treatment. In the upper jaw the success rate is about 90%, while in the lower jaw it is about 95% because of denser bone. If an implant does not move at the Stage II surgery, it is said to be osseointegrated. If an implant is not osseointegrated at the time of Stage II surgery, the implant is removed, and another is placed at no charge 4-6 weeks later, after the bone has healed.
- ii) Infection: As with any surgery, there is always some risk of infection. We use a sterile technique during surgery to avoid this. Also, to avoid any infection, you will be given a prescription for antibiotics after Stage I surgery.
- iii) Bruising: In order for the surgeon to have good access to the bone when placing the implants, the soft tissues need to be reflected. This may result in bruising under the chin or around the area the implants were placed. The bruising resolves over 5-10 days. People who have fair skin or bruise easily are more likely to experience this.
- iv.) Altered sensation: As mentioned, when implants are placed into the lower jaw, the large nerve there must be identified and avoided. If the implants need to be placed in close relation to this nerve, you may experience altered sensation after surgery. This sensation may be a tingling, pins and needles sensation, burning, or, more likely a numb feeling. Most commonly this sensation is temporary, but very rarely it is permanent. If it is temporary, it may take up to a year for complete sensation to return.

We are very fortunate to have the technology and expertise to use dental implants to improve the quality of life for many people. Please let one of our staff know if you have any questions about dental implants for you.

We Welcome New Patients

Christmas Gift Ideas

If you would like to give someone in your life “pre-paid” dental care to **brighten up their smile at Christmas** we can put a credit on their account and give you a gift certificate.



Baby News:

Tracy has a new baby girl “Clare”, a sister for Sophie. Tracy expects to be back to work in March 2006.

Joanne has a new baby girl “Natalie”, a sister for Owen. Joanne expects to be back with by June 2006.

Angela is due to have twins in November 2005. She likely won't be back to work until November 2006.

We have some new additions to staff this year. Joan and Tammy are our wonderful new hygienists, and we are so happy to have them decide to work here.

Gloria and Melanie will share reception duties. Caelin is assisting Dr. Lovely while Sher recovers from a hip replacement and Bethanie is assistant to Dr. Colette Smith.