



Implants

Implants are devices that replace the roots of missing teeth, and are used to support crowns, bridges or dentures. Implants are placed in your jawbone surgically. Most of the time, implants feel more natural and secure than other methods of replacing missing teeth, such as dentures.

There are many reasons why it's important to replace missing teeth:

- Having all of your teeth can make you more self-confident. You don't worry that people notice that you have teeth missing.
- When teeth are lost, the area of the jawbone that held those teeth starts to erode. Over time, you can lose so much bone that your jaw will need a bone graft to build up the bone in your jaw before your dentist can place implants or make a denture that fits properly.
- Tooth loss affects how well you chew and what foods you are able to eat. Many people who have missing teeth have poor nutrition, which can affect overall health.
- The loss of teeth can change your bite, that is the way your teeth come together. Changes in your bite can lead to problems with your jaw joint, called the temporomandibular joint.
- Losing teeth can lead to changes in your speech, which also can affect your self-confidence.

There are several types of implants, including root form, blade form, Ramus frame and subperiosteal implants.

Root-form implants are the most common type used today. A root-form implant looks like a small cylinder or screw and is made of titanium. After an implant is placed in the jawbone, a metal collar called an abutment eventually is attached to it. The abutment serves as a base for a crown, denture or bridge.

The key to the success of all implants is a process called osseointegration, in which the bone in the jaw bonds with the implant. Titanium is a special material that the jawbone accepts as part of the body.

The ability of titanium to fuse with bone was discovered accidentally. In 1952, a scientist named Per-Ingvar Brånemark was using titanium chambers screwed into bones as part of his research to discover how bone healed after an injury. When he tried to remove the titanium chambers, he found they had become bonded to the bone.

This discovery led Dr. Brånemark to do further research into how titanium implants might work. In 1965, the first root-form implants were placed in people. Other types of implants also have been used for the past 30 to 40 years. There are many implant systems available, made by various dental manufacturers.

The benefits of implants include:

- **Feel** — Because implants are imbedded in your bone, they feel more like your natural teeth than bridges or dentures.
- **Convenience** — You will not need to worry about denture adhesives or having your dentures slip, click or fall out when you speak.
- **Nutrition** — You will be able to chew better with implants. Chewing can be difficult with regular dentures, especially ones that don't fit perfectly. A regular upper denture also covers your palate, which can reduce your sense of taste.
- **Self-esteem** — Because implants are so much like your natural teeth, you will think about them less. Your self-esteem and confidence will be improved because you will not have to worry about denture problems or people noticing that you have missing teeth. Regular dentures also can affect your speech, which can make you less self-confident when talking with others.

Information sourced from www.colgate.com