

# Dental Implants

Dental implants are designed to provide a foundation for replacement teeth that look, feel, and function like natural teeth. They also can be used to anchor and/or support a dental prosthesis.

The implants themselves are titanium posts that are surgically placed into the jawbone. Titanium is biocompatible. It will fuse to bone similar to a knee or hip replacement. These metal anchors act as tooth root substitutes. The bone bonds with the titanium, creating a strong foundation for artificial teeth. Small posts that protrude through the gums are then attached to the implant. These posts provide stable anchors for artificial replacement teeth. Implants also help preserve facial structure, preventing bone deterioration that occurs when teeth are missing.

## **The Surgical Procedure**

For most patients, the placement of dental implants involves two surgical procedures. First, implants are placed within your jawbone. For the first three to four months following surgery, the implants are beneath the surface of the gums bonding with the jawbone. If desired, you can wear temporary replacement teeth during this time period.

After the implant has bonded to the jawbone, the second phase begins. Dr. Silva will uncover the implant and attach small posts that protrude through the gums and will act as anchors for the artificial teeth. When the artificial teeth are placed, these posts will not be seen. The entire procedure usually takes four to six months. Most patients experience minimal disruption in their daily life.

## **Surgical Advances**

Using the most recent advances in dental implant technology, Dr. Silva is able to place single stage implants. These implants do not require a second procedure to uncover them, but do require a minimum of three months of healing time before artificial teeth are placed. In most cases the implant(s) can be placed at the same time as a tooth extraction – further minimizing the number of surgical procedures.

In select cases, an implant can be placed with a temporary tooth on the implant by the patient's dentist the same day. These cases usually involve teeth in the front of the mouth.

Dental implant placement is a team effort between an oral and maxillofacial surgeon and a restorative dentist. While Dr. Silva performs the actual implant surgery, tooth extraction(s), and bone grafting, if necessary, the restorative dentist (your dentist) fits and makes the permanent prosthesis. Your dentist will also make any temporary prosthesis needed during the implant process.

## **What Types of Prosthesis Are Available?**

A single prosthesis (crown) is used to replace one missing tooth – each prosthetic tooth attaches to its own implant. A partial prosthesis (fixed bridge) can replace two or more teeth and may require only two or three implants. A complete dental prosthesis (fixed bridge) replaces all the teeth in your upper or lower jaw. The number of implants vary depending upon which type of complete

prosthesis (removable or fixed) is recommended. A removable prosthesis (over denture) snaps onto attachments on the implants, whereas a fixed prosthesis is attached to the implants with titanium screws and removable only by the dentist.

Dr. Silva performs in-office implant surgery. Outpatient hospital implant surgery is for patients who have special medical or anesthetic needs or for those who need extensive surgeries.

### **Why Dental Implants?**

Once you learn more about dental implants, you realize how life changing they can be. When you lose several teeth – whether it's a new situation or something you have lived with for years – chances are you have never become fully accustomed to losing such a vital part of yourself. Dental implants can be your doorway to renewed self-confidence and peace of mind.

A Swedish scientist and orthopedic surgeon, Dr. Per-Ingvar Branemark, developed this concept for oral rehabilitation more than 35 years ago. With his pioneering research, Dr. Branemark opened the door to a lifetime of renewed comfort and self-confidence for millions of individuals facing the frustration and embarrassment of tooth loss.

### **Why Select Dental Implants Over More Traditional Types of Restorations?**

There are several reasons: Why sacrifice the structure of surrounding good teeth to bridge a space? In addition, removing a denture or a “partial” at night may be inconvenient, not to mention that dentures that slip can be uncomfortable and embarrassing.

### **Are You a Candidate for Implants?**

If you are considering implants, your mouth must be examined thoroughly, and your medical and dental history reviewed. If your mouth is not ideal for implants, ways of improving outcome, such as bone grafting, may be recommended.

### **What Type of Anesthesia Is Used?**

The majority of dental implants and bone graft can be performed in the office under local anesthesia or under IV anesthesia.

### **Do Implants Need Special Care?**

Once the implants are in place, they do not need any special care. This means they need the same care as natural teeth - good oral hygiene (brushing and flossing) and keeping regular appointments with your dentist.