



What Are Dental Implants?

This letter is intended to answer some of the questions you may have regarding dental implants.

What are dental implants? Dental implants are basically sophisticated screws made of a medically pure metal, Titanium. These screws are then placed in the jaw bone and rest under the gum for 3 - 6 months. During this time they actually fuse to the jawbone and become osseointegrated. After the appropriate healing time, we uncover the implants and use them to replace one or more missing teeth by fabricating some sort of dental prosthesis.

How long have implants been used in dentistry? Dental implants have been available for the past 50 or so years. There are significant differences, however, between the various types of implants that have been used to replace missing teeth. These differences are important since they are directly related to the implants success rates. The implants currently in use today, Osseointegrated Implants, were originally developed in Sweden by Dr. P.I. Branemark, a Swedish Orthopedist approximately 25-30 years ago. They have been used in the U.S. for the past 12 years.

I understand they originated in Sweden? Is there a difference between the different implant manufacturers? All implants in use in the United States are regulated by the Food and Drug Administration. Originally, the only system available was the Noblepharma™ Branemark implant. Today, there are numerous implant companies in use on a daily basis. All of these companies are FDA approved and must meet very stringent requirements. We will choose the system that is best for you and the one that allows us to accomplish our mutual restorative goal.

What are implants made of? Implants are made of commercially and medically pure Titanium. This is the same metal that has been successfully used in hip implants for many years. It is inert and is not known to cause any type of rejection phenomenon.

How complicated is the surgery? Implant surgery is done in two stages. The first stage involves the placement of the implants into the available jaw bone. This is most



commonly done with just local anesthesia. It is complicated only in the sense that the surgery requires great precision. Every attempt is made to insure success. The room is set up similar to an operating room, the equipment thoroughly sterilized and the most modern techniques utilized. Stage two involves the uncovering of the implants after they have integrated (fused). This can usually be accomplished with the dental laser and is a relatively minor procedure. In both instances, minimal postoperative discomfort is noticed. You will be given the appropriated antibiotics and analgesics just as a precaution. Very definitive postoperative instruction will be given to you at the time of surgery. If you follow our guidelines, everything should proceed without a hitch.

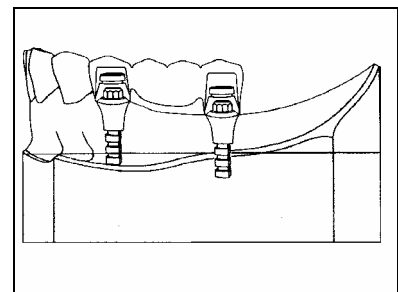


Can implants be rejected? No! They are made of an inert metal which has no history of rejection by the body. They are not a living organ such as the lung or liver and therefore there is no rejection phenomenon. If failure should occur, and this is only a remote possibility, it is mechanical in nature and not due to rejection by the body. By the way, depending on the source you read, implants are anywhere from 85-95 percent successful depending upon certain

factors such as implant location, amount and quality of bone etc. These factors will be evaluated before we place your implants. If you have any questions regarding this or any other aspect of the implant process, please let us know.

If I lose several teeth, do they each have to be replaced with a separate implant? No. Although implants simulate the roots of teeth, biomechanically one implant can be used to replace one or more teeth. This will depend upon the mechanical requirements of your chosen prosthesis. At your consultation we will discuss the various treatment alternatives and the type and number of implants that are needed in order to fulfill our treatment objectives.

What about infection and complications? During the surgery every attempt is made to maintain a totally sterile field. This tends to minimize any potential for postoperative infection. Once again, we will prescribe the appropriate antibiotics as a precautionary measure. Once the implants have been engaged in your prosthesis, it is imperative for you to



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maintain scrupulous oral hygiene. Success very often depends on your cooperation and homecare efforts.

What types of restorations can be placed on implants? The answer to this question depends upon your treatment objectives. This can vary from simple removable prostheses, using the implants for retention, to totally implant supported porcelain fused to metal crowns and bridges. Implant bridges can be removable or fixed, not removable, depending upon the number of implants. We are now finally able to replace single or multiple missing teeth returning the dentition to a biologically healthy and esthetically pleasing state.

Will I be able to chew and function normally? Yes. Once your implants have integrated, you will be able to function normally without any unusual sensations. Your chewing ability will really depend upon the type of prosthesis you have chosen.

How long is the entire implant process? Dental implants take approximately 3-4 months in the lower jaw and 6 months in the upper to integrate. Once integrated, it takes several visits to several months to complete the restoration depending upon the complexity.

What is the cost? The cost of implant dentistry is based upon a combination of the surgical phase and the prosthetic phase. Your total treatment fee will depend upon the number of implants and the complexity of your final restoration.

We hope that this brief letter will answer some of your questions regarding implant dentistry. We will be happy to discuss any of these questions with you at your consultation. Please write down your questions so that we can be sure to answer them to your satisfaction.

Sincerely,

Cary Ganz DDS PC

The Prosthodontic Practice of Cary Ganz DDS

Tel. 516 741-1230

Fax 516 741-2257

<http://www.ganzdental.com> email: drj@ganzdental.com