

The Beauty of a Same-Day Smile

Time for a Dental Implant Update

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Dental implants are considered the best treatment approach to treat dental problems such as missing teeth, periodontal disease, advanced dental decay, and failing fillings. Many patients that I meet on consultation are initially reluctant to accept dental implant treatment, as they have been told that they will need to use an uncomfortable, removable appliance such as a denture or retainer during the implant healing phase. At The Chicago Center For Cosmetic & Implant Dentistry, a treatment approach is utilized in which your smile can be restored to beauty and function the *very same day* that teeth are removed and the dental implants are placed.

Dental implants can be thought of as a 'tooth root' replacement. Quite simply, the dental implant provides root-like support for a replacement tooth or groups of teeth. In the past, in order to replace a tooth, or groups of teeth, required the dentist to either grind away perfectly healthy adjacent teeth, or it required the patient to accommodate to removable teeth which are unsightly, uncomfortable and are difficult to chew with. It is known that the damage to adjacent teeth with these older treatment techniques leads to a lifetime of time-consuming and costly maintenance and at times, the eventual loss of these teeth.

The main advantage to dental implants is that teeth can be replaced without damaging adjacent teeth, therefore not committing adjacent teeth to a lifetime of troubles. When considering the maintenance of dental implants however, the usual problems associated with teeth are not encoun-

tered. Because dental implants never get dental decay, they never need root canal treatment. Also, they do not break and they do not suffer from periodontal disease bone loss like teeth do, and therefore can provide a lifetime of service with minimal maintenance.

The modern dental implant has been used successfully for more than 50 years. Although there have been many changes to the design of the original dental implant and the manner in which the tooth attaches to it, the surgical steps have remained essentially unchanged. The usual protocol is that the bad tooth is pulled and the extraction socket is allowed to heal. Next, the dental implant is surgically placed into the jaw bone and allowed to heal, and finally, the replacement tooth is affixed to the top of the dental implant.

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This treatment sequence can often take well over a year to perform. During this period of healing and tooth fabrication, the patient has an option to either go without teeth or use an uncomfortable removable denture. Today, at The Chicago Center For Cosmetic & Implant Dentistry, dental implant treatment time can be greatly reduced and the

missing tooth replaced in a manner that is not removable and won't cause damage to adjacent teeth.

The state-of-the-art in implant dentistry utilizes the healing potential of the extraction socket and the bio-technical advances of the dental implant itself. This new treatment approach has been very well-studied and found to be successful. Today, once a 'hopeless' tooth is identified, the tooth is removed gently and the dental implant is placed immediately into the extraction socket. Once the dental implant is placed, a temporary tooth is placed directly onto the dental implant foundation. The advantage of this technique to the patient is that there is no need to use a removable denture, and by placing the dental implant and temporary tooth immediately after the removal of the tooth, the natural appearance of the tooth emerging from the gum-line is maintained.

Not everyone is a candidate for this treatment approach. A thorough examination and a consultation are needed by a dental specialist with experience in providing this unique and advanced level of implant treatment.

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