

## Patient information

### Dental Implants

Liverpool University Dental Hospital

**This leaflet gives patients information on dental implants. The leaflet outlines some of the benefits of dental implants, the risks involved and alternative treatment options that you may want to consider. Funding for dental implants within the NHS is very limited and your specialist team will be able to discuss this further with you.**

#### What is a dental implant?

Dental implants are small metal screws which are surgically placed into the jaw bones. After a period of healing, the dental implant will fuse to the jawbone and can then be used to support false teeth. The teeth can be screwed or cemented directly onto the dental implants as single crowns or multiple implants may together hold a bridge replacing several missing teeth. Alternatively, dental implants are used to support bars or studs, over which a removable set of teeth are clicked into place.



**Examples of single crowns, bar and stud supported dentures.**

#### Benefits of Dental Implant Treatment

Dental implants can provide benefits compared to conventional treatments such as bridges and dentures. It is important that you discuss these benefits and alternative options with your Specialist clinical team looking after your care.

#### What are the risks?

Although very unlikely, implant placement can result in damage to the adjacent teeth and nerves.

Sometimes dental implants fail to fuse with the bone. If this happens, they will become loose and will need to be removed.

Over time, parts of your implant can loosen and wear. This can lead to failure of the implant, or the teeth attached to it. This will need to be attended to urgently by your local Dentist.

### **What are the alternative treatment options?**

Although dental implants are excellent, they may not be the best option and alternative treatment to replace the missing teeth may need to be considered. For example, bridges held on teeth, or dentures could be considered. These treatments require less treatment time, do not require surgery and may be suitable for patients in whom implants are not advised.

Your clinical team will discuss in detail with you the alternative options that may be suitable in your case and their advantages and disadvantages.

## **The Dental Implant Treatment Journey**

### **Stage One: Assessment and treatment planning**

It is important to provide us with your medical history including any medications you are currently taking. After an initial assessment and before dental implants are placed you will go through a detailed planning phase. This will involve X-rays of your teeth or jaws and moulds of your mouth. Depending on the complexity of your case there may also be a need to attend several appointments to try in 'mock ups' of the new teeth. This can take several months to complete.

Dental Implants have a lower success rate for patients who smoke. If you are a smoker, it is unlikely you will be offered NHS dental implant treatment.

### **Stage Two: Consent**

After planning has been completed you will be invited for an appointment where the treatment plan will be discussed with you in detail. The risks and benefits of the proposed implant treatment will be explained, and you will be asked to sign a consent form. There may be several clinicians involved in your care as we are a Teaching Hospital.

### **Stage Three: Surgery**

This stage of treatment can vary depending on the complexity of the dental implants and any bone grafting required.

Many cases are suitable for surgery under local anaesthetic. In these cases, the gums and bone are numbed by injection, and you stay awake throughout the procedure. Dental implant placement under local anaesthetic is carried out at the Dental Hospital. Most procedures take between 45-90 minutes, and you go home after the surgery is completed. In complex cases dental implants will be placed under general anaesthetic. This would require you to attend Aintree Hospital.

Most procedures are still carried out as 'day cases' and you will go home in the late afternoon/evening. There are often long waiting lists to access care under General Anaesthetic.

You are likely to be swollen and a little sore after the procedure. You will also have some stitches in your mouth. This can make eating and speaking difficult. This will improve considerably over the next two to seven days.

### **Stage Four: Healing**

Dental implants take on average three to four months to heal and fuse to the bone. During this time, you may need to attend for several follow up appointments to have stitches removed, or impressions taken for temporary teeth.

In advanced cases involving bone grafts, it may be necessary to have a short period with no replacement teeth as we wait for any swelling to subside. Grafted patients may undergo a second phase of further scans and planning to account for the changed jaw shape.

### **Stage Five: Restoration**

After the dental implants have healed you will attend for several more appointments in order to make the final teeth. Depending on the complexity of your treatment this phase can take between six to twelve months.

There is often a need to take multiple moulds of your mouth to produce Try in's or mock ups of the new teeth to ensure that they fit as accurately as possible. This will enable us to fulfil your functional and cosmetic needs.

### **Stage Six: Maintenance**

You will be reviewed at the Dental Hospital around twelve months after your new teeth have been fitted. During this time you may have to return for small adjustments to be made.

After you are discharged from the Dental Hospital your ongoing review and care will need to be arranged with your local Dentist. This on-going maintenance will need to be self-funded and may sometimes require you to access the services of Specialist dentists external to the dental hospital for long term care and maintenance of your false teeth. In very complex cases on-going maintenance may be provided by the Dental Hospital.

### **Feedback**

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future. Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

### **Further information**

**If you have any questions please contact the Liverpool University Dental Hospital**

**Telephone: 0151 706 5000**

**Textphone number: 18001 0151 707 5000**

All Trust approved information is available on request in alternative formats, including other languages, easy read, large print, audio, Braille, moon and electronically.

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