

# Dental Implants

## EXPERT ADVICE

### Why Implants?

“Your jawbone exists to support your teeth. When you lose a tooth, you begin to lose bone mass, and eventually your facial structure deteriorates. If you have to have a tooth pulled, replace it with a dental implant, and prevent bone loss. If you already have dentures, implants can be placed to maintain the bone, and improve the function of your denture.”



Bill Childress, DDS, M.D., East Brainerd Oral Surgery

Dental implants provide a foundation for replacement teeth that look, feel and function like natural teeth. They are a great option for people who have lost teeth due to periodontal disease or some other cause.

### DENTAL IMPLANT BASICS

Implants are tiny titanium posts surgically placed in the jawbone where teeth are missing. Once a metal implant post is placed, the jawbone



Providing the Foundation for Your New Smile

By Judith Nembhard

grows into the surface of the implant. Over several weeks, the implant becomes more and more fixed in the bone, providing a strong foundation for the replacement tooth (a process called osseointegration). Usually, a temporary tooth replacement is worn over the implant site.

The second phase of the dental implant procedure involves attaching a small metal post called an abutment. Some implant systems (single-stage) do not require this second step, because they use an implant which already has the extension piece attached. During the third phase, a dentist attaches a replacement tooth, or crown, to the abutment.

### ENDOSTEAL VS. SUBPERIOSTEAL IMPLANTS

*Endosteal* (in the bone) is the most common type of implant, and includes screws, cylinders, and blades surgically inserted directly

into the jawbone. The procedure is used as an alternative to bridges or removable dentures.

*Subperiosteal* (on the bone) places the implant on top of the jaw, the metal framework protruding through the gum to hold the prosthesis. This is done for patients unable to wear conventional dentures and who have minimal bone height.

### SAME-DAY IMPLANTS

Increasingly, surgeons and dentists are cutting months off treatment time by offering the dental implant procedure and restorative dentistry at the same time. “Fast and fixed” is a surgical concept that places single-stage implants and attaches a fixed prosthesis to them on the same day. The patient is able to leave with a fixed solution instead of having a temporary prosthesis while the implant osseointegrates with the bone. 🦷

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