



Options for Replacing Missing Teeth

Not only do our teeth help enable us to chew and speak properly, they also enhance our smile and help retain a youthful appearance. Once a tooth is lost the bone around the tooth resorbs and we lose support for the facial tissues which can lead to a change in appearance. The following are options for replacing a missing tooth.

Implants

An implant is made from titanium and inserted into the jawbone to act as an artificial root. A crown is attached to the implant and it looks and functions like a real tooth. Implants can replace one or several missing teeth and in some cases an implant can be fitted with special attachments to hold a denture securely in place.

An implant is surrounded by gum tissue and so looks like a natural tooth. It helps minimise bone loss in the jaw which in turn keeps the support of the facial tissues.

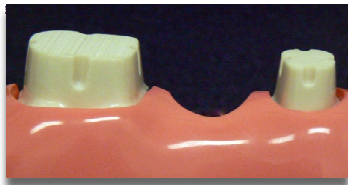
Unlike a bridge, implants do not require the neighbouring teeth to be reshaped.

Implant teeth are cared for like natural teeth and good oral hygiene is crucial to the lifespan of an implant.



Bridges

Bridges are a fixed way to replace one or more missing teeth. They consist of an artificial tooth anchored to the natural teeth on each side of the gap.



Bridges can be made of extremely strong porcelain, or porcelain fused to gold alloy. Porcelain is strong and can be made to match the colour of the natural teeth. Gold alloy is used underneath the porcelain for its strength.



Apart from regular flossing and brushing, bridges require additional cleaning under the artificial tooth. A floss threader is used to pass floss underneath the artificial tooth to remove plaque, keeping the gum healthy.

Dentures

A partial or full denture is a removable appliance with either an acrylic or metal base. In some cases your dentist may recommend implants in correlation with dentures for added stability.

Over time dentures do become loose and need rebasing. There will be a change in facial shape due to the missing teeth but people who still have some natural teeth experience less gum shrinkage and fewer changes in the underlying jawbone.

