



Options for replacing missing teeth

When one or more teeth are missing, what is the best way to replace them?

There is no one-size-fits-all solution when it comes to missing teeth. Every patient's clinical needs are unique, and each person will have preferences and budgetary considerations, all of which must be addressed in the final restoration.

Our dentists work closely with patients to help them consider all available options and make the best treatment decision for them.

Options for replacing missing teeth



Dental implants

A fixed (non-removable) way of replacing one or more missing teeth.



Dental bridges

A fixed (non-removable) way of replacing one or more missing teeth.



Dentures

A removable appliance that can replace one or more missing teeth.

Dental implants

A dental implant is a fixed (or non-removable) way of replacing one or more missing teeth.

A dental implant made from medical-grade titanium is surgically inserted into the jaw bone to create an artificial root. After placement, healthy bone grows around the implant, anchoring it in place in a process called 'osseointegration'.

Following successful osseointegration, the implant can support a crown, denture, or bridge.

At Richmond Road Dental, we refer our patients to dental specialists for implant placement, as it involves surgery requiring highly technical skills and specialised training. In most cases, the patients are referred back to us for the final stage of treatment: fitting dental crowns, bridges, or dentures to the implant.

Benefits of dental implants

Dental implants are very similar in size and shape to natural teeth, and most patients quickly adapt to their presence.

Dental implants don't rely on adjacent teeth to hold them in place. This means they can be placed without trimming adjacent teeth to receive crowns. So, while the placement of implants is surgical, their presence has minimal impact on the other natural teeth.

Important to know

- Treatment involving the placement of one or more dental implants can be complex and require extensive planning.
- Dental implants cannot be used in all situations.
- They are seldom used when treating children or teenagers.
- They cannot be placed unless enough healthy jawbone is available to anchor them securely.
- For various reasons, some patients may not be good candidates for surgery.
- The placement of dental implants is a surgical procedure that carries risks. Our dentists will explain the risks and benefits of surgical treatment in detail so each patient can make an informed decision about their treatment.
- Dental implants, like natural teeth, must be kept clean and plaque-free. While the implant cannot decay, the gums are still vulnerable to periodontal disease. Many dental implants can be cleaned with daily toothbrushing and flossing, while others need additional cleaning techniques that our dentists will explain.

Dental bridges

A dental bridge is a fixed (or non-removable) way of replacing one or more missing teeth.

The missing teeth are replaced by one or more artificial teeth held in place by crowns on the teeth adjacent to the gap. Bridges may also use dental implants as their anchorage point.

Every bridge is as unique as the patient. Our dentists carefully consider whether a bridge is a suitable option and, if so, how it should be designed to optimise the patient's oral health. If a bridge is one of several suitable options, our dentists will spend time with the patient to assist them in making the best decision for them.

Unlike dentures, a dental bridge is:

- similar in size to natural teeth
- covers very little gum
- fixed in place.

A bridge may not be the best option for:

- people with unfilled natural teeth next to the gap.

Fixed bridges can be made from various materials, including:

- stainless steel
- gold
- metal alloys
- porcelain
- resin
- a combination of metal and porcelain.

Important to know

- Our bridges are crafted in local premium dental laboratories, ensuring beautifully constructed restorations of the highest quality materials.
- Bridges can be tricky to keep clean, but our dentists have some helpful techniques and tools that help our patients become bridge-cleaning ninjas.

Dentures

Dentures are removable appliances that can replace a few or many teeth.

There are several types of dentures available.

Removable complete (full) dentures

A complete denture replaces all teeth in the upper or lower arch. It is made of acrylic resin and designed to be held in place by the cheeks and lips.

Removable partial dentures

A partial denture replaces one or more missing teeth and uses the remaining teeth to hold it in place. They can be made of plastic or metal.

Fixed complete or partial dentures

Fixed dentures are made in much the same way as removable dentures. They are cemented to an underlying tooth or implant and can only be removed by a dental clinician.

A denture may not be the best option if the patient cannot tolerate a bulky restoration in their mouth.

Important to know

- A local Australian denture lab crafts our dentures.
- Some denture cases require referral to a denture specialist.
- Patients are strongly encouraged to remove their dentures at night. This break is necessary for optimal health of the underlying gums and teeth.
- All dentures must be kept very clean to ensure good oral health. Fixed dentures can be challenging to clean, and our dentists spend time teaching patients techniques to make it easier.
- People with no remaining natural teeth should visit their dentist regularly to ensure their gums are healthy and their dentures fit comfortably and securely.

This document contains general information about replacing missing teeth. It cannot replace individualised advice from your dental practitioner. Please consult your dentist for specific recommendations about your oral health and necessary treatments.

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