

# IMPLANTS: A SUCCESSFUL PRACTICE

DENTAL AND IMPLANT SURGEON  
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FACTS OF DENTAL IMPLANTS



Dental implants have been used for over fifty years. In the early days, nails would be hammered into the jaw providing a form of retention to dentures. Today's implants offer far more than that. They have been carefully studied and tested, and shapes and forms of implants have evolved into the 97 per cent successful story of a titanium implant osseointegrated (fused) to bone.

## FACTS ON DENTAL IMPLANTS

- Implants fuse to the jaw-bone through a process called osseointegration. This biotechnology was discovered through orthopaedic surgery
- Some of the oldest first generation implants have survived for over 40 years
- Conventional implants require 3 to 6 months healing prior to loading of teeth
- Some implants make use of a special implant surface allowing for quicker healing and immediate loading of teeth
- There is nothing better than your healthy tooth. However when this is missing implants may offer a great replacement. Implants carry a 97 per cent success rate and a 3 per cent failure rate
- Implants are not suited for everyone – patient selection is key for good results.

Not every patient is a good candidate for implant treatment. A consultation prior to implant treatment planning may reveal certain social, medical and dental factors which may alter the surgeon's judgement into whether he or she should obtain implant treatment.


## HIGH-RISK PATIENTS

- Moderate to heavy smokers: smoking reduces the blood supply to all sites within the body including the mouth. This reduces the nutrients as well as the efficiency of the immune response raising the risk of infection
- Patients suffering from Type 1 Diabetes: these patients suffer from increased risk of infection
- Patients with poor oral hygiene: high levels of plaque and calculus harbour bacteria capable of causing an inflammatory response around the implant resulting in bone loss around the implant. This causes loss of implant support and eventual mobility of the implant leading to failure
- Patients suffering from chronic gum disease: periodontal disease is to teeth as peri-implantitis is to implants
- Patients having undergone cancer therapy: cancer treatment reduces bone strength and vascularity raising the risk of bone necrosis (bone decomposition) around implants. The same goes for patients making use of daily medication following the cure of their cancer
- Patients who grind their teeth: high occlusal or masticatory loads are transmitted to both the teeth, natural or implanted and the underlying bone. These excessive loads may not only break any implant-related components of the implanted teeth but also cause circumferential bone loss of the implant.

## SUCCESSFUL IMPLANTS AND THEIR MAINTENANCE

The key to successful implant treatment starts off with choosing the right patient. Healthy motivated patients are an excellent start. Oral hygiene must also be very good, including brushing, flossing and the use of low concentration medicated mouthwash is a must. Smoking cessation goes hand in hand with good long-term implant survival as implant success decreases up to 80 per cent in smokers. Implants should be placed by experienced qualified clinicians and routine dental check-ups twice yearly are crucial in maintaining good oral health, carried out by the implantologist and hygienist.

Placing implants is a highly delicate process requiring skill and clinical experience. No matter how well the implants have healed, their long-

term success lies with the patient's understanding of their commitment to dental implants; everyday care and routine professional examination. Ask your dentist if you are a good candidate. If you are, then you'll benefit enormously! 

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