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## **Dental Implants**

Do you hide your smile because of spaces from missing teeth? Maybe your dentures don't feel secure. Perhaps you have difficulty chewing. If you are missing one or more teeth and would like to smile, speak and eat again with comfort and confidence, there is good news! Dental implants are teeth that can look and feel just like your own! In years past when you lost a tooth you had only two options for replacement – a fixed bridge, which involves grinding down the teeth adjacent to the missing one, or a removable partial denture, which can feel bulky and uncomfortable and must be removed for cleaning. Today, dental implants are commonly chosen as the most favorable treatment for replacing missing teeth and have actually been around for decades.

Implants are manufactured “anchors” that look like cylinders or screws and are usually made of titanium. Restoring teeth with implants first involves surgical placement of the implant, which serves as a “root,” into the jawbone. This is usually done with only local anesthesia in a dental chair in as little as thirty minutes for a single implant. Most patients have only minor discomfort after the procedure. Typically the implant is allowed to integrate with the jawbone for several weeks before a permanent restoration is placed over it. At that time, a post, or “abutment,” is attached to the implant and a crown is cemented onto the abutment, requiring no anesthesia.

Multiple implants can be placed in cases of several missing teeth or even in patients with no teeth where a denture would normally be worn. Implants can also be used to create “snaps” to which a denture can be affixed to help stabilize the denture, or implants can serve as a base for a fixed bridge. If properly cared for, dental implants can last a lifetime!

Today's implants look and feel like natural teeth, but they are not for everyone. To be a good candidate for implants you must be healthy with good bone levels and have good oral hygiene. Whether you are a young, middle-aged, or older adult or whether you need to replace one tooth, several teeth, or all your teeth, there is a dental implant solution for you!

**Smile Specialists!**