

### *Information for Patients Considering Implant Surgery*

If you are thinking about having implant surgery I think it is very important that you are aware that there are alternatives other than implants for the replacement of your missing teeth. I assume that you probably have considered these and may even have tried one of these other methods for 'filling those gaps'. However, to save time during the consultation, I wish here to go over the other possibilities once more.

#### *Partial Dentures*

These consist of one or more teeth attached to a plate which clips around your remaining teeth. The plate is easily removed for cleaning purposes but it is this ease of removability that makes this treatment alternative so unsatisfactory. Most people find these types of dentures an embarrassment, as they do tend to come loose and are easily dislodged.....often at very awkward moments! Partial dentures can hasten the loss of bone under the gum also by placing pressure on the ridge where the teeth once were and collecting plaque which causes gum disease and tooth decay.

#### *Bridges*

In some cases a bridge can be the better alternative for the replacement of missing teeth. This would be if the teeth on either side of the gap are heavily filled or compromised in any way. However, the big disadvantage of a bridge is that it is necessary to destroy what is in most cases the good tooth tissue of the adjacent teeth in the preparation of the bridge. The placement of implants into the gap between two sound teeth is a far better alternative and does not involve the destruction of sound tooth tissue.

#### *Bone Grafts*

In most cases it will be necessary to do a bone graft into the area at the time of surgery. If you have just lost teeth in an accident, or teeth have had to be removed because of fractured roots, failed crowns or periodontal disease then there may well be bone loss involved. The longer the teeth have been lost, the more bone loss there will be. The implants can be anchored into the existing bone but it is then necessary to fill the space around the implants with bone to harden and support the implants. This bone is usually freeze dried bone combined with bone collected from the implant site. Bone is sometimes necessary to place under the soft tissues, especially in the front of the mouth, so that the end result has a well-contoured appearance and is not marred by unsightly gaps between the teeth where the bone has resorbed. It is sometimes necessary to place more bone at the uncover of the implant so that these soft tissue contours can be enhanced.

People are sometimes surprised at the length of time it takes for the treatment to be completed. An implant is an artificial root. It is placed in the bone under the gum and has to remain there undisturbed while new bone forms around it and grows through the hole in the end of it. Because the bone is much denser on the lower jaw, this process takes less time on the lower jaw (three months) than the upper (six months) where the bone is usually much thinner.

If bone graft is used, then two months must be added to the waiting time on the lower jaw and three months to the upper. During this waiting time, you have the alternative of wearing a partial plate (which your Dentist will make for you) or your existing denture, or going without anything.

#### *Costs*

The cost of your consultation is \$210 which includes initial X Rays. This is payable at the time of consultation.

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A single implant costs \$1900. This cost includes your post-operative appointments for suture removal, two denture relines and two healing checks to make sure that everything has settled down after surgery. It also includes the second stage surgery where the tops of the implants are uncovered and healing collars placed. Two-thirds of this cost is payable at the time of surgery along with the bone graft and medication fee and the other one-third is payable at the time the implants are due to be uncovered.

A bone graft costs \$850. This is payable at the time of surgery and includes the cost of any further grafting required at the uncover of the implant. To save you the hassle following surgery, your medication will be got from the Pharmacy for you and given to you when you attend for surgery. If you have a card entitling you to a reduction in pharmacy charges, please let us know before your surgery.

It is important to get a quote from your Dentist for the cost of the prosthetics that he/she will eventually make to go onto the implants once they have integrated.

### *Guarantees*

I guarantee my implants. If for some reason an implant fails to integrate, I will replace it at no charge to you.....usually at the time of uncover. My success rate for the implants that I use is around 96% so you would be very unlucky to have to have it redone. However there are occasions when implants fail to integrate with the bone...often for no obvious reason and they are usually fine the second time around. The main cause of failure once the prosthetics have been fitted is an ill-fitting prostheses leading to problems with the occlusion. If implants fail because of this then it is something you will have to take up with the Dentist who fitted the prosthetics. Most implant companies now guarantee their prosthetic components as well as their implants. **All guarantees are null and void if you do not adhere to the maintenance program that will be explained to you at the time of your surgery. Also, I do not offer this guarantee to smokers.**

This will eventually involve the implants being checked once a year. It is like anything else you invest money in....implants require servicing and maintenance the same way your natural teeth do. You can lose implants through periodontal disease the same way that you can lose natural teeth from periodontal disease.

### *Sinus Elevations (Upper Jaw)*

In some cases, patients who have been without their natural upper teeth for a considerable time will have more advanced bone loss, particularly at the floor of the sinuses. This does not mean that it is impossible to have implants but it does mean that a further procedure may well be necessary to guarantee the success of the implants. This procedure is called a Sinus Elevation and involves lifting the floor of the sinus just above the area where the implants will go and filling the newly created space with bone. In the cases of severe bone loss, this will be done as a separate procedure and the implants placed eight months later once the new bone has hardened enough to support the implants. However in most cases of moderate bone loss, the sinus elevation can be done and

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the implants placed at the same time. The cost of this procedure is \$1200 for each sinus which obviously includes the cost of the large amount of bonegraft material that is required to fill the space. If you fall into this category, the amount of bone that you have will be determined by a special cross sectional X Ray called an *Implatome*. This is like a mini Cat Scan and will show the height and the width of bone present. This X Ray is done only once you have decided to proceed with implant treatment and the cost is \$100 for one and \$50 for each additional *Implatome*.

### ***Nerve Repositioning (Lower Jaw)***

The Inferior Mandibular Nerve runs along three quarters of the length of the lower jaw. As in the cases of moderate to severe bone loss discussed above, it is possible that because no natural teeth have been present on the lower jaw the same sort of bone loss may have occurred here over the nerve, making it impossible to place implants of sufficient length to support an adequate superstructure. Again, all is not lost as it may well be possible to do a nerve repositioning. This involves exposing the nerve, placing tapes around it and gently easing it sideways while long implants are placed at the back of it. The nerve is then placed gently back where it was, and left to recover. Naturally, the whole area is anaesthetised and you suffer no discomfort during the procedure. However, the Inferior Mandibular Nerve is very sensitive and sulks at the least provocation, let alone having tapes put around it and being pulled sideways! It can take four to six months to recover completely and there is always the risk that it will be permanently damaged to some degree. Again the exact amount of bone is determined by an *Implatome* X Ray done only after a decision has been made to proceed with surgery. The cost of this procedure is \$1200 each side.

I hope that the above information has been of some help to you. It is not meant to put you off having your surgery and the majority of patients do not need all the procedures detailed here. The outcome of most implant surgery today is easily predictable and even in the cases of extensive bone loss, there are procedures available to help ensure a better outcome for this patient

*Please feel free to contact your Dentist at any stage if you have questions.*