

Dental implants

Restorative Dentistry Department
Information for Patients

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Introduction

Dental implants are titanium (metal) screws surgically put into the jawbone to replace missing teeth. The implant acts as an artificial tooth root. Once the implant has become fully healed and stuck in the jawbone, it can support a:

- dental crown (cap),
- fixed (stuck on) bridge,
- removable denture (plate).

What treatment options are there?

- doing nothing,
- removable dentures,
- dental bridges,

Dental implants

You can get dental implants for single or multiple missing teeth caused by variety of reasons. We can only do treatment guided by the Royal College of Surgeons England 2019 guidelines. You can get dental implants for patients:

- born with missing teeth.
- born with a cleft palate.
- who have tooth loss injury (dental trauma).
- loose dentures that cannot be made better.
- with surgical jaw changes because of cancer treatment.

Suitability for treatment

We will check if you are suitable for treatment by looking at:

- your general medical health,
- the amount and quality of jawbone,
- your gum health,
- the condition of your teeth,
- your age, and if your jaw bones has stopped growing
- where the nerves, blood vessels and the sinus are,

Your clinician will assess this during the planning stage.

What are the benefits?

- Improve appearance,
- Improve quality of life,
- Helps you chew and eat food more easily,
- Helps keep the remaining jawbone healthy,

What are the risks?

Patients may have discomfort, swelling and bruising after surgery. However, severe or lasting pain should be reported right away.

Possible complications:

- An infection,
- Numbness or loss of feeling in part of your mouth, lips or face,
- A sinus infection with any upper jaw implants,
- Bone graft not working properly,
- Implant failure or loosening,
- The replacement tooth or teeth becoming cracked or broken,
- Loose or fractured clips/attachments and screws,
- Changes in the appearance of the gums, such as the gums shrinking away from the implant.

Your pre-assessment appointment

You will need to have a number of pre-assessment appointments A clinician will need to do an assessment. You may need to have:

- Full dental examination,
- Dental X rays,
- Impressions (moulds) or digital scans of your mouth for study models,
- Clinical photographs,
- 3D scans for detailed bone assessment,
- Joint consultations with other specialists,

Bone grafting

We may need to do bone grafting. This is when there is not enough bone to support an implant and we need more bone to help with this. We may take a bone graft from:

- your chin,
- the area near your wisdom tooth,
- your hip (for larger grafts),
- special bone substitute material from animals,

If you need a bone graft, your treatment may take 4 to 6 months longer.

How do I prepare for the procedure?

- Smoking is a risk factor for implant failure. It can delay healing and significantly reduce success rates. Stopping smoking before and after treatment is strongly recommended.
- Maintain good mouth hygiene by brushing and cleaning in between your teeth.
- Make sure you have something to eat if you can. Make sure to do this if the treatment is under local anaesthesia (numbing the mouth).
- Make sure you have someone to accompany you and transport back home. This person should stay with you for a couple of hours.

What happens on the day of implant surgery?

We often place implants under local anaesthesia in an outpatient clinic. A member of staff will take you to the dental surgery. Your clinician will explain the procedure and check that you are happy to go ahead with the treatment. In certain circumstances a general anaesthetic (putting you to sleep) may be better for you. You will then have the surgery in the operating theatre. You would have had the chance to talk about this choice during one of your check-up appointments before the surgery appointment.

What happens during the surgery?

We will place a protective sterile sheet over you to reduce contamination. We will lift the gum. We prepare the bone using implant drills. We will then place the implant in the jaw. We may place a cover screw to leave the implant beneath the gum. Or we can use a healing cap which sticks out through the gum. This process removes the need to make a small cut through the gum to expose the implant later. We put stitches in places to allow healing. Your local dentist will be able to give you a temporary denture to use whilst it heals.

What happens after the surgery?

We may advise you to use pain killers to help with any pain. Do not wear your denture for the first 1 to 2 weeks if not needed. You may need denture adjustments for comfort.

We then leave the implant to heal and fit in with the jawbone for around 3 to 6 months. We will give you written advice on how to care for your mouth after the surgery.

What to look out for at home (complications)

You may have mild to moderate discomfort and swelling. Pain killers can help manage this.

If you have:

- A large swelling,
- bleeding,
- numbness,
- or suffer with severe pain,

Please contact the department on weekdays 8.30am to 5.00pm right away on **0116 256 3525 / 0116 256 3526**. During the evenings and weekends contact your local Emergency department.

Follow-up appointment

You will have a follow up appointment about 10 to 14 days after surgery. Any remaining stitches will be removed at this appointment. Sometimes your review appointment may be 2 to 3 months after surgery. The clinician will check the gum area next to the implants. They may ask for X-rays.

What if my implant needs to be exposed?

You may need to have a second minor procedure if your implant was left below the gum. We will make a small cut in the gum. We will then place a healing cap which helps to shape the gum for the restorative phase.

Final steps of treatment: crown, denture, bridgework

After you have healed from the surgery, you will have follow up X rays to check the implant and bone. We will then:

- Make impressions (moulds) or take digital scans on your teeth.
- Send this information to a laboratory.
- Fit your new crown, bridge or denture onto the implant.

You will have follow-up appointments to let your clinician monitor your gum and bone health around the dental implant. How many follow-up appointment you have depends on the type of dental work you have.

What are the different types of dental implants?

Below are some examples of artificial teeth supported by dental implants.



Figure 1: Implant supported denture with stud and clip system.



Figure 2: Missing upper tooth.

Metal healing cap.

Final implant crown.



Figure 3: Multiple missing teeth replaced with implant supported bridges.

Care of your dental implant

Good oral hygiene is important. You should:

- Brush 2 times a day.
- Clean between your teeth and around implants.
- Attend regular dental reviews at your dentist.

You may need repairs and adjustment to the implant denture, crown or bridgework. This can occur over some time. This will need to be monitored by your local dentist after you have been discharged from the hospital.

Contact details

All leaflets must include a contact number for patients if they have questions.

Phone number: **0116 256 3525**

0116 256 3526

Opening times: 8.30am to 5pm

Email address: uho-tr.restoratedentistry@nhs.net

Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice

Visit www.uhleicester.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals.

To give feedback about this information sheet, contact uhl-tr.informationforpatientsmailbox@nhs.net

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If you would like this information in another language or format such as EasyRead or Braille, please telephone 0116 250 2959 or email uhl-tr.equalitymailbox@nhs.net

We are a research hospital and you may be asked to take part in research