

Implants in Maxilla (Upper jaw)

If teeth require extraction prior to implant surgery, they will be extracted with a special, gentle technique to preserve as much bone as possible. The extraction site will be left to heal for a period of 4-6 weeks. Implants are placed in a two-stage procedure. Implants are inserted into the jawbone after gently lifting the gum. The implants will be completely buried for the initial period of healing to allow integration with the bone. In such a situation, another minor surgical procedure would be necessary after 2-3 months during which the implants will be uncovered and the next components connected. Following a further period of 2-3 weeks for gum healing, impressions can be taken for the temporary crown/bridge on these implants.

As mentioned during the consultation, there may be inadequate bone for implant placement which would become evident at the time of surgery. This can be grafted with bovine bone substitute (bone substitute from cows) at the time of implant placement. This bone will also need to be covered with a special collagen membrane which is derived from pigs. There is more detailed information in the Bone Graft Information Sheet.

In some sites of the mouth (e.g. back teeth) the surgical technique and the implant system we use, allows us to place implants in a single surgical procedure. The implants are then left to integrate with the bone for approximately 4-6 weeks. Therefore, after 6 weeks healing, impressions can be made for the final crowns.

Occasionally however, depending upon the quality of bone (especially in grafted bone) encountered at the time of surgery it may be necessary to completely cover the implant to allow undisturbed healing. In such a situation, another minor surgical procedure would be necessary after 2-3 months during which the implants will be uncovered and the next components connected. Following a further period of 2-3 weeks for gum healing, impressions can be made for the final crown.

Furthermore, if implants are needed to replace back teeth in the upper jaw, often there is inadequate bone height available to allow placement of an implant with adequate length. In such cases, bone grafting of the maxillary sinus (hollow sinus cavity in the upper jaws) becomes necessary. If that would be the case, I will discuss the technique and complications with you in further detail at consultation.

You should be aware that the implant success rates in the upper jaw are around 90-95% in non-smokers. However, the success rates are lower when implants are placed in smokers and grafted bone, especially if sinuses are involved. In the event of an implant failing, it is generally possible to replace it within a few months. This would inevitably extend treatment time.

In addition to the possibility of implant failure there is also a likelihood of experiencing discomfort, swelling or bruising for a few days after the surgery. There is also a slight risk (less than 1%) of damage to the nerve of an adjacent tooth leading to the need for root canal treatment.

Naturally when dealing with the human body, no guarantees are possible; no guarantee for aesthetic results or for permanent longevity can be given or implied. Despite this however, we assure you that together we will endeavour to achieve the best possible results.

It is your job to maintain meticulous oral hygiene and remain as plaque-free as possible. Most of the problems encountered after extensive treatment are usually the result of poor oral hygiene. We cannot stress too strongly the need for meticulous oral hygiene during all stages of your dental care.

It is important that you inform us of any changes in your medical status and that we are aware of any medications that may be prescribed for you.