

Learn About Dental Implants: Surgery, Advantages, Risks, and Insurance Questions

Description

Many Americans suffer from teeth loss due to teeth decay, injury, or periodontal diseases.

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Bridges and dentures were the only available options for many years but now implants are the best solution to look and feel good. Dental implants maintain and strengthen the bone structure to provide you perfect smile.

1. **What is Dental implant surgery?**

Dental implants are screw-like roots to provide a strong base for artificial teeth. The procedure to replace tooth roots with screw-like posts to implant artificial teeth is called dental implant surgery. About 6% of adults in Americans already have dental implants. The number of tooth/dental implants is expected to increase up to 23% by 2026. The surgery for dental implants is a multi-step process. To restore damaged or missing teeth, a dental implant is the most expensive but the most reliable procedure.

1. **What are the types of dental implants?**

Following are three common types of tooth implants. The safest of all is endosteal implant followed by subperiosteal, and the least common and complex type is zygomatic implants. Zygomatic implants are rarely used.

- **Endosteal implants** are the most popular and common type of dental implants. This type of

implant requires a good and healthy jawbone to easily fuse the post. Endosteal suits most of the people in which screw-shaped placeholder posts are put into jaws to fit the artificial teeth. Some healing time is required after surgery so that dental implants can easily fuse with the jaw bone to make a stronghold. After healing the artificial tooth is placed into the post to fit it accordingly. If you do not find this procedure comfortable, you can try the second type of implant.

- **Subperiosteal implants** are another common type of dental implant. This type can be used as an alternative to endosteal implants in which implants rest under the gum but on top of the jaw bone. A post is attached to a metal frame which is then placed under the gum. The gum starts healing around the metal frame and secured it in place. The artificial tooth is then held to the poles of gums. This procedure is suggested to patients who do not have enough jawbone for the implant to be adjusted or those who do not want intensive oral surgery.
- **Zygomatic Implants** are the least popular type of tooth implant in which the implant is placed in the cheekbone instead of the jawbone. A patient can also go for a zygomatic implant instead of the subperiosteal implant if he doesn't have enough jawbone.

2. **What is the procedure for a dental implant?**

- The first step of a dental implant is the extraction of a damaged tooth from its position.
- If your jawbone is not enough to stand against chewing pressure, grafting of the jawbone is the next step to make a strong base.
- In the next step, the gum is cut to expose the bone, a hole is drilled in the bone to place the dental implant.
- Jawbone is allowed to heal and grow to integrate it with the implant.
- Another minor surgery is performed to place abutment (the metal part that serves as a base for the crown).
- After the healing of the mouth, an impression of teeth and gum is made by the dentist to fix the artificial tooth.

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3. **What is the cost of dental implants?**

A dental implant also called tooth implants that may cost an average of $3000-$4,500 in the United States. In many cases, bone grafting is required which may cost an extra $200-$32,00. This is a very expensive process but implants are long-lasting and they do not need to be replaced after every 2-3 years so, these are not much expensive over time. The cost may vary from state to state. The cost of tooth implants may include the cost of a dentist's visit, jawbone and gum examination, bone grafting, and extraction of the damaged tooth.

2. **Advantages of dental implants**

Following are the advantages of dental implants.

- The most important benefit of dental implants is that they behave like natural teeth. Your natural chewing power is restored and you cannot easily differentiate between the implanted tooth and the natural tooth. You can brush it and eat with eat normally.
- Dental implants are long-lasting, they can even last a lifetime whereas the life span of a dental bridge is only 10 years. Tooth implants are bio-compatible that are made of titanium. These implants can integrate easily with the bone and not be rejected by the body. Implants are also non-toxic for the body.

- Tooth implants avoid bone deterioration. Bone loss may occur due to the absence of implants or tooth roots. The bone may lose 1/4th of its volume if the tooth is lost and no implant is placed for one year and this deterioration may continue over years. A dental implant is the best option to prevent bone loss instead dentures accelerate it.
- The gap due to missing teeth may cause the surrounding teeth to shift towards the gap. This may pull your teeth out of shape and position. This will ultimately affect your chewing ability, bite, and most importantly appearance. This will also make implant and tooth replacement difficult. If you get a dental implant at the proper time, it can keep your adjacent teeth stable and in the proper position.
- Dental implants prevent gum diseases. A gap due to missing teeth may trap food particles and bacteria cause different gum diseases. A tooth implant at right time can save you from gum diseases.
- Dental implants prevent the unwanted effects of premature aging. Bone deterioration due to missing teeth may cause facial sagging. This may cause the lower portion of the face to collapse, excessive wrinkles, pointed chin, and thinning of lips. This may cause the person to look older than his actual age. Dental implants help you to look younger with a perfect smile.
- Dental implants enable you to pronounce words correctly. Missing teeth or even treatment options like dentures may affect your speech. Tooth implants behave like natural teeth that allow you to speak naturally.
- Tooth implants are anchored firmly in place and never let you embarrass due to slip or shift inside the mouth. Dentures cause people to become self-conscious about eating, talking, and laughing because dentures can visibly slip or shift.
- Dental implants help you to get back your smile and self-esteem. You can feel about yourself. The estimated success rate of dental implants is 98%.

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3. **Risks of dental implants**

Following are the disadvantages or risks of dental implants.

- The major disadvantage of dental implants is that they are expensive. You cannot count dental implants in affordable options. Dental implants can cost you thousands of dollars.
- Aftercare of dental implant surgery is important to reduce the risk of infection. You should take good care of the implant according to the advice of the dental surgeon. The location and severity of the infection are inspected to select the best treatment. If bacterial infection occurs in gum, antibiotics or soft tissue grafting can be used to treat it. If infection occurs in bone, the treatment may require the removal of the dental implant or bone tissue.
- Gum tissues around the dental implant may begin to recede causing inflammation and pain. You should immediately visit the dentist to avoid inflammation ad treat the problem because it may lead to implant removal.
- Dental implant surgery follows a process called osseointegration in which the implant fuses with the jawbone. This is a long-term process that takes months to complete. If the implant does not fuse with the jawbone, the dental surgeon may suggest removing it. The patient may develop anxiety and may not agree to reattempt the implant after healing.
- The dental surgeon may place an implant too close to a nerve unintentionally that may cause damage to it causing continuing tingling, pain, or numbness. A study reported that nerve damage due to dental implant surgery may decline life quality. This problem requires immediate attention and treatment to reduce further effects. The damaged inferior alveolar nerve can be a serious

health issue. Symptoms of the damaged inferior alveolar nerve may include numbness in the lower lip and chin, pain, discomfort, tickling, tingling, or burning sensation.

- Surrounding anatomic structures may be injured during dental implant surgery. For example, perforation in maxillary sinus tissues may cause sinus problems and later on infection in the affected tissue.
- The stability of the implant can be declined due to excessive bone deterioration in the implant area. Black triangles may appear between teeth that do not look aesthetically pleasing. This also makes the cleaning difficult.
- Fracture in the abutment screw may become a serious complication that cannot be fixed easily. This may need the screw removal and replacement of the dental implant. A new dental implant is not easy because the remaining bones may not support the new implant.
- Dental insurance may not cover the cost of dental implants. Most of the time, dental insurance does not cover the implant cost but it can cover the restoration cost of dental implants. The restoration cost may be associated with dental crown, bridge, or dentures. Always ask the insurance agent about what is covered and what is not covered before buying a policy.
- You cannot get instant results from dental implants. Dental implants require a long time even months to heal.

4. **Insurance questions related to dental implants**

Some important insurance questions related to dental implants are;

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1. **How can I get dental implants covered by insurance?**

Dental implants are too expensive but the cost may be worth it if your implant is long last and functions like natural teeth. They cost more than dentures and bridges but can give better results. The dental surgeon requires special training and equipment to perform implants. If the cost of dental implants is out of your reach, consider a good dental insurance policy that can cover it. Some insurance plan covers only a part of the cost for implants. Coverage for dental implants may also depend upon the reasons you need implants. One of your medical insurance and dental insurance or both may provide coverage for a dental implant. If your dental plan has implant coverage, ask about the annual limits of the plan from the insurer. This will help you to plan the treatment in a way that cannot dent your pocket. You can get done your treatment in two phases in which one phase complete at the end of the first year and the second phase in the second year. Some insurance plan covers the cost of bridge or crowns but not cover the implant itself. If you are suffering from a medical problem related to tooth loss, your insurance plan may cover the cost of the implant. Accident insurance policy may also cover implants if you lost a tooth in an injury or accident. You can visit your dentist to make an estimated cost for your implant because it’s may vary from region to region. After making an estimation, you can contact your dental insurance company to ask about the coverage and out-of-pocket expenses.

2. **How much does insurance pay for dental implants?**

The cost for dental implants may vary depending upon the coverage. The cost will vary from case to case, you can consult your dental surgeon ad insurance provider to determine the expected cost. Your insurance's annual maximum, coinsurance, copayments, and deductibles determine the cost. Your specific treatment needs along with insurance factors determine the cost. For example, the number of dental implants, number of teeth to be replaced, type of implant, and needed procedures are used for cost estimation.

3. **Which insurance companies cover dental implants?**

Delta Dental insurance, Spirit Dental, Ameritas, Aetna® Vital Saving, Renaissance, and Cigna Dental Insurance are some companies providing insurance plans to cover the cost of dental implants. You can compare different plans to choose the best for you.

4. **Can dental implants be billed to medical insurance?**

Yes, a dentist can bill any treatment to insurance companies that are included in the scope of their license. Dental implants are also eligible for medical billing. If a medical condition requires implants, insurance companies have to pay for their cost.

5. **What is the expected cost of the insurance plan for dental implants?**

Every company offers different coverage, but dental insurance plans for individuals may cost from $14-$30 per month, and plans may cost $27-$56 monthly for a family. You may also pay for deductibles, copayments, and coinsurance according to your plan. Most of the insurance plans do not cover the full cost of dental implants.

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Category

1. Lifestyle

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