

## How to Care for your New Dental Implant

Dental implants are often the ideal solution to replacing a lost tooth. However, they are not the same as your natural tooth and will require some special care to ensure your implant will last as long as possible while maintaining the health of the surrounding natural teeth.

Dental implants are not susceptible to the decay that afflicts natural teeth, but still require adequate cleaning to remove plaque that can stick to them and infect the surrounding tissue. Periodontal disease can destabilize the jawbone, and, consequently, the implant. If you have a natural tooth next to your implant, it is imperative to properly clean the in between space. If not, your natural tooth will be susceptible to decay.

### Cleaning single dental implants

Although a dental hygienist can clean the implant's abutment and the crown, the patient must also perform daily maintenance. Signs of improper home care include:

- Bleeding
- Red and swollen gums
- Pain when chewing
- Bad breath
- Bad taste in the mouth

Taking a small amount of extra care when cleaning a single dental implant can shield surrounding teeth from bacteria and increase its longevity.

**Brushing:** Brushing twice per day is necessary for patients with and without implants. Patients with dental implants must gently brush the crown, using a SOFT nylon brush to avoid scratching its surface.

**Using mild toothpaste:** Unlike natural teeth, implant crowns have a porcelain surface that abrasive substances such as baking soda can wear away. Brushing with a nonabrasive (fluoridated) toothpaste eliminates this concern.

**Flossing:** Waxed or natural fiber floss is used in between all natural teeth as well as implants. You may notice that the floss will go further under your implant crown compared to a natural tooth. This is normal, allow the floss to follow the curve of the crown.

**Water flossing:** Water flossers can direct water flow deep inside the space between the crown and the gums where bacteria accumulate. A pulsating hydraulic force of room temperature water washes away plaque and debris and is gentle enough to apply every day.

**Gum stimulating:** Patients can gently massage the gums with stimulators to send nutrient-rich blood to the implant region. A gum stimulator is also an excellent cleaning device consisting of a long metal or plastic arm supporting a small triangular-shaped rubber or silicone tip that reaches beyond the gumline near the implant crown to scrape away plaque. It can enter the tight space between the crown and other teeth to loosen trapped debris.

**Interdental brushing:** Patients can use small, narrow brushes with soft bristles to clean implant-supported crowns near the gumline where standard toothbrushes cannot easily reach. We will help determine the size that's right for you.

**Mouth rinsing**

A mouth rinse can penetrate spaces that other home care tools cannot reach. Antibacterial rinses can dislodge debris while killing germs that can cause periodontitis.

**Other Concerns:**

It is often recommended to have a custom clear retainer to wear at night when you have an implant. Your natural teeth move slowly over time. Implants are fixed in the jaw and do not migrate. Sometimes this can result in a gap between the implant and the natural tooth next to it. This gap can be a cosmetic concern. Also, food can be trapped in this area causing pain and damage to the gums. A simple retainer will prevent this from occurring.

**Tips for keeping your implants healthy....**

- Brush your teeth and implant twice a day with a soft toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste
- Floss daily around the implant and between your teeth
- Use a water flosser or interdental brush to clean in between the implant and gum line if needed.
- Avoid biting down on hard objects like ice, nutshells, or pens
- Visit us for regular checkups and cleanings minimally every 6 months
- Ask for Fluoride varnish to be applied every 6 mos at your regular check up appt.
- Discuss having a retainer made to wear nightly to keep the natural teeth in position.

Please discuss any concerns or questions you have about your new implant. One of our highly trained hygienists will be happy to work with you to create a custom homecare routine.

Thank you for the trust you place in us. We truly believe in working together with you as a team to achieve our mutual goal of your lifelong dental health and wellness.

**Please do not hesitate to call us with questions. We are here to help! 978-468-4411**