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# Considering a Single Tooth Implant

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When a tooth is missing, a dental implant can be a great choice for replacing it. An implant is a small titanium post that replaces the roots of a missing tooth and supports a custom-made crown.

## Problems caused by a missing tooth

A missing tooth can cause a chain reaction of problems, including loss of bone in the jaw, shifting teeth, difficulty keeping teeth free of plaque and bacteria, grinding and clenching, and pain in the jaw joints.

Teeth transmit chewing forces through their roots to the jawbone. This provides the stimulation bone needs to stay healthy, so when a tooth is missing, the jawbone around the area begins to shrink, along with the surrounding gums.

A missing tooth also changes the biting forces on teeth around the space. Neighboring teeth begin to shift, and the opposing tooth begins to extrude out of its socket.

These changes create places around the teeth that are hard to keep clean, so plaque and bacteria quickly accumulate. This accumulation can cause tooth decay and periodontal disease.

Changes in the bite also put improper chewing forces on the shifted teeth. This may lead to grinding and clenching, as well as painful problems with your jaw joint, the TMJ.



*Single tooth implant*



*Finished implant*

## Diagnosis and treatment

To determine if an implant is right for you, we do a thorough examination. The examination includes recording your medical history in which we discuss any condition that may interfere with healing. We perform a visual examination to check the health of your teeth and gums. To check the health of your jawbone, we take panoramic x-rays and possibly CT (computerized tomography) scans. We take impressions and bite registrations to create an accurate model of your mouth.

When we have thoroughly studied these records, we will be able to discuss which implant treatment options may be best for you.

## Benefits of an implant

An implant fitted with a crown effectively replaces a missing tooth. The implant is held firmly in the jawbone, so it feels much like your natural teeth when you talk and chew. The crown is custom crafted to match or enhance your smile. A dental implant is a great way to keep your jawbone healthy, to stop neighboring teeth from shifting, and to maintain a stable bite.