

Caring For your Dental Implant

Welcome to the exciting world of dental implants! You can enjoy the benefits of your new teeth for many years to come...*if you take care of them properly*. Now that your surgical treatment phase is complete and the implant has been placed, *you* are the most important member of the implant team.

Dental implants must be conscientiously cared for to remain functional and require some special attention and treatment. While implants are immune to decay they aren't to gum disease. We will present recommended methods for cleaning and maintaining your implants and outline an essential plan for thorough oral hygiene.

Here are some important points to remember:

Basic is Best

Basic hygiene is the best hygiene. Brushing and flossing consistently after each meal are very effective in controlling plaque accumulation. Use a toothbrush with soft polished bristles and toothpaste approved by the American Dental Association. Regular flossing, with standard dental floss or special floss like Super Floss, is an essential step in maintaining good oral hygiene. Floss that is thickened, like Super Floss, is more effective in cleaning and polishing the implant posts and appliance. It is important to floss all sides of the implant posts and in-between the teeth areas.

Commitment

Implant maintenance is a commitment. Inconsistent maintenance can, over time, lead to serious complications, as is often the case with natural teeth. In addition to regular brushing and flossing, there are special tools which will help you care for your implants. Special brushing devices like the plastic coated proxabrush or an automated toothbrush will complement regular brushing. Special mouth rinses can also help control bacteria.

- ◎ The plastic coated proxabrush is especially designed to clean narrow spaces your regular toothbrush can't reach. It's shaped to allow the bristles to slip between your appliance and the gum line, cleaning the exposed implant post, the underside of the appliance, and stimulating the gum tissues.
- ◎ Another way to control the level of plaque is by using antibacterial mouth rinses like Listerine. Dip a proxabrush or a Q-tip into a small cup of the rinse and apply directly to the implant surface and surrounding tissues. You may also use the mouthwash as a rinse after brushing and flossing. Consult our hygienists for the best regimen for your individual case.

Be Gentle

Always be gentle with your implants. Though made of metal, implants can be scratched, which then provides a breeding ground for bacteria. Use only brushes with rounded and flexible bristles or plastic, wood or rubber stimulators. Never use any metal instruments on your implants. You don't need to use extra force when brushing your implants. Excessive force may scratch the implant post or irritate the gum and surrounding tissues.

Regular Professional Cleanings

Most patients benefit from 4 professional cleanings a year. We will be monitoring your implants with x-rays and evaluation and guiding you to take optimum care. All the implants we use are warranted by the manufacturers for ten years, **provided** regular follow-up care was performed.

We're Counting on You

Remember, the success of your dental implants now depends on *you*. If you follow the instructions of your periodontal team, and dentist, and maintain good oral hygiene, your implants will allow you to eat, speak, laugh and smile for many, many years.