

# Considering **Implants** for a **Partial Arch**

When several teeth are missing, dental implants can be a good choice for replacing them. Implants are small titanium posts that replace the roots of missing teeth and support custom-made crowns and bridges.

## Problems caused by missing teeth

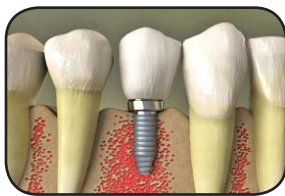
Missing teeth can cause a chain reaction of problems, including loss of bone in the jaw, shifting teeth, difficulty keeping teeth free of plaque and bacteria, grinding and clenching, and pain in the jaw joints.

Teeth transmit chewing forces through their roots to the jawbone, and this provides the stimulation bone needs to stay healthy, so when teeth are missing, the jawbone around the area begins to shrink, along with the surrounding gums.

Missing teeth also change the biting forces on teeth around the space. Neighboring teeth begin to shift, and the opposing teeth begin to extrude out of their sockets.

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 can put improper chewing forces on the shifted teeth, and this may lead to grinding and clenching and painful problems with your jaw joint, the TMJ.



*Implant post*



*Bone loss*



*Implant posts for bridge*

## Diagnosis and treatment

To determine if implants are right for you, we do a thorough examination. The examination includes recording your medical history so we can 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 also 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 implants

A dental implant fitted with a crown or a bridge effectively replaces missing teeth. The implant is held firmly in the jawbone, so it feels much like your natural teeth when you talk and chew. The crown or bridge 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.