



For additional information about BioHorizons implants contact your periodontist, oral surgeon or dentist. You can also find us on the web at www.biohorizons.com.



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Case photographs courtesy of Dr. Michael Reddy and Dr. Jean O'Neal



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If you have missing teeth...



...did you know you are losing bone?

Tooth replacement with dental implants

Science | Simplicity | Value



► **If you have missing teeth, did you know that you are losing bone?**

Losing one or more of your teeth starts a chain of events that can have dire physical and cosmetic consequences. The most obvious result is a gap in your smile. Less obvious is the loss of chewing function and the inability to eat a complete diet that can result from it. While these are certainly serious issues, a potentially bigger problem lies hidden beneath the surface: **bone loss**.

Without the tooth to stimulate the jaw, the bone beneath it will begin to disappear (atrophy) in the same manner that muscle underneath a cast gets smaller. Since your facial bone supports the skin and muscles on top of it, losing volume can cause your face to look prematurely aged. The good news is that dental implants offer a solution to stop bone loss.

► **Tooth replacement options.**

Conventional treatment options for tooth replacement, Crown & Bridge and full or partial dentures, address the short-term cosmetic problem of the missing teeth, but do nothing to stop the bone loss. Crown & Bridge also requires that two or more healthy teeth be ground down to serve as abutments (anchors) for a bridge, leaving them at a much greater risk for cavities and endodontic failure. If the original abutment teeth fail, more healthy teeth must be sacrificed to serve as anchors, while you continue to lose bone beneath the bridge.

However, with implants, the healthy teeth are left alone. Plus, dental implants, like natural teeth, transmit chewing forces to the jaw, stimulating it and halting the bone loss. This is why many leading dental organizations now recognize dental implants as the standard of care for tooth replacement.

Untreated missing tooth



- Uncosmetic
- No chewing function
- Rampant bone loss

Traditional Crown & Bridge



- Cosmetically attractive
- Cuts down healthy teeth
- Bone loss under bridge

Implant with a crown



- Cosmetically attractive
- Full chewing function
- Stops bone loss

▶ Who is a candidate for dental implants?

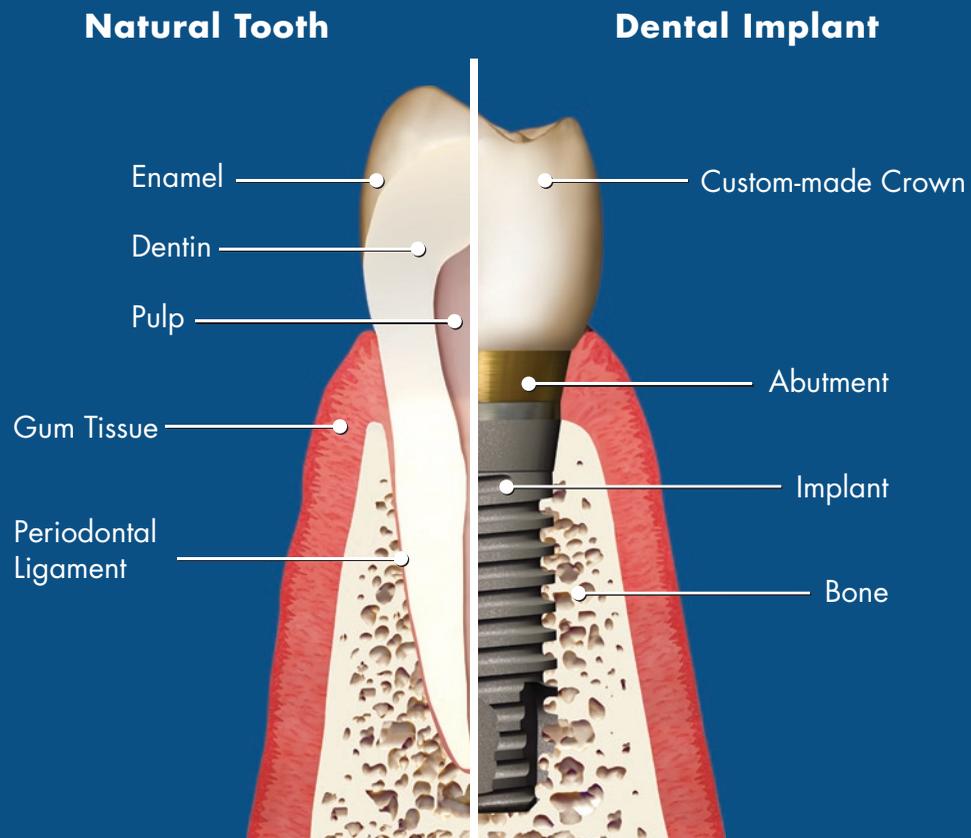
Dental implants can be placed in most adults who are in good to moderate health. They are not typically placed in adolescents until they have reached their full expected height. Certain uncontrolled medical conditions may decrease the effectiveness of implant treatment, so be sure to discuss your full medical history with your doctor before beginning treatment.

Every patient is different and patient results may vary. Only a trained clinician can determine the best treatment plan for you. Please ask your doctor to explain the benefits and risks to see if tooth replacement with implants is right for you.

▶ Benefits of Implants

- ▶ Dental implants transmit chewing forces to the jaw, stimulating it and halting the bone loss associated with missing teeth. Conventional treatment options do not offer this important benefit.
- ▶ Unlike conventional Crown & Bridge tooth replacement, dental implants do not require the grinding down of healthy teeth for abutments.
- ▶ Implants restore the ability to chew properly, allowing a complete and healthy diet.
- ▶ Whether you are missing one tooth or all your teeth, there is most likely a dental implant treatment plan that can bring back your smile.

▶ Anatomy of a tooth vs. implant



▶ A brief history of dental implants.

Archeologists have recovered ancient skulls where teeth have been replaced by materials such as cast iron and carved sea shells. Modern dental implants made from titanium have been placed extensively since the 1970s. Titanium offers the benefit of being lightweight and strong and is not rejected by the body (biocompatible). It is the most widely-used metal in

orthopedic joint replacement and dental implants. Most dental implants are titanium screws that are placed into the jaw bone in a relatively pain-free procedure. There the implant serves as an anchor for a custom-made tooth crown that will be attached to it. Once the crown is in place, you may not be able to tell it apart from your natural teeth.

▶ What to expect.

Implant treatment can be broken down into four phases: treatment planning, implant placement, crown placement and hygiene maintenance. Your doctor will take x-rays and create a model of your existing teeth to determine how the implant should be placed. Occasionally, a bone or gum tissue graft will be needed to provide an adequate site for placement.

The implant is then placed in the bone and given a period of time to heal (osseointegrate) before attachment of the crown. In some cases, you can receive a temporary crown the same day. The final crown is usually placed 3-6 months after implant placement.

Maintaining your dental hygiene is the most important role you will play in the long-term success of your implant. Your doctor will give you specific instructions for brushing and flossing the area and put you on a regular check-up cycle. Given proper care, dental implants can give a lifetime of satisfaction. In the rare instances that implants do not function properly, your doctor can usually perform a procedure to correct the problem.

▶ Implants and Insurance.

The fee for implant treatment varies depending on the complexity of the procedure and on location. Some dental insurance plans cover a portion of the fee, but most do not. Extended payment options that can bring treatment within reach of most patients are often available.

While dental implants may have a higher initial cost than conventional treatment options, studies have shown that they have a lower lifetime cost. A good investment, considering that implants help maintain bone and protect your youthful appearance.