

## “Hey Doc, my teeth have been missing for a while. Do I still have enough bone for dental implant? (Bone grafting for dental implant, Part 5: Other Bone Grafting Techniques)”

Besides Guided Bone Regeneration (GBR) and Sinus Augmentation that I have discussed in the previous 2 articles, there are other bone grafting techniques that can be utilized to increase bone width and bone height for dental implant placement. The following are some of the examples of different techniques to rebuild bone.

### BLOCK BONE GRAFT

- Block graft is usually indicated when a large bone defect needs to be rebuilt. A block of bone is harvested, usually from the back of the lower jaw near the wisdom tooth or from the chin, and screwed onto the defect site. Alternatively, a block of bone can be purchased from the bone bank and be used for the bone graft. If successful, the bone block will fuse with the bone on the defect site, increasing the bone volume for implant placement.



### RIDGE EXPANSION

- If there is adequate bone height but lacking bone width at the implant site, ridge expansion is another option to increase the bone volume in the horizontal dimension. Ridge expansion involves making a horizontal cut into the remaining jaw bone where the implants are going to be placed. Then, placing a series of special instruments into the cut, the jaw bone is slowly expanded out to gain width. Sometimes, implants can be placed right after the expansion is complete. Other times, bone graft material is placed into the space created from the expansion and is allowed to heal before implant placement.



### SOCKET GRAFT

- If the patient knows that he/she is going to have a dental implant to replace a non-savable tooth, it is best to do a socket graft right after the removal of the tooth. The main purpose of the socket graft is to prevent the shrinking or the loss of jaw bone after tooth extraction. After the tooth is removed, the socket is cleaned out and bone graft material is placed into the socket. A barrier is often placed over the socket to keep the bone graft in place. It usually takes about 6 to 9 months for the healing to complete before implant placement. Socket grafting is a predictable procedure and it can save the patient a lot of headache in the future in terms of not having to deal with the risks and the cost of regenerating the lost bone. In other words, it is much better and easier to keep the patient's own bone versus to regain the lost bone.



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