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DENTAL IMPLANTOLOGY

PATIENT INFORMATION: Bruxing (heavy bites) and Dental Implants

You have been given this leaflet because your dentist has identified evidence that you have a heavy bite. You may have excessively worn teeth, chipped fillings or crowns or fractured fillings.

Some people clench or grind their teeth during the day or at night when they are asleep. This clenching and grinding is called 'bruxing' and is a well recognised cause of increased wear of the teeth, of fractured teeth and of fractured fillings.

Implant supported teeth are no different to natural teeth in that they can also suffer increased problems in patients who are bruxers. In fact, since they don't have the shock absorbing ligament which is present in natural teeth, implant components are less able than natural teeth to withstand extreme biting forces.

Dental implant supported crowns, dentures and bridges have plastic, metal and ceramic parts and these can fail more quickly and commonly in patient who are 'bruxers'. Such failures can include the following:

- chipping or fracture of the tooth coloured ceramic porcelain which covers implant crowns and bridges
- cracks and fractures of plastic dentures
- more rapid wear of the plastic and metal parts which connect implants to removable dentures
- screw loosening
- screw fracture
- implant fracture (fortunately this is relatively uncommon)

Whilst many of these failures can be rectified or repaired, a fractured screw can sometimes be impossible to remove and a fractured implant is normally irreparable.

There also may be evidence that the bone around implants can disappear more rapidly in 'bruxers' although this is as yet unproven.

If you are a bruxer you can still have dental implant treatment; however you need to be aware of the issues described above as they may involve more frequent repairs and maintenance than is typical for a non bruxer and this can have cost implications in the future.

If you are a night time bruxer we would strongly recommend that you protect your implant restorations by wearing a soft or hard bite guard when sleeping.