

## How must I look after my new implants?

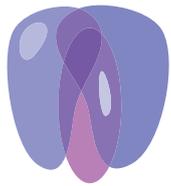
Now that you have had your implant teeth fitted we hope that you are delighted with the final results and they will give you many years of security. There are, however, a number of things to remember about your replacement teeth with regard to how they feel and function, and how you should look after them to ensure that they remain healthy.

Most people find they get used to their new implant teeth very quickly, while others find it takes a few months until they feel completely confident to use them like normal teeth. It is so important that you look after your implants correctly and attend for regular reviews to check your implants and protect your investment. If cared for correctly, your implants will give you many years of excellent service.

Ideally we would like to review your implants regularly. It is of course also vital to have regular checks with your dentist for your other teeth, to prevent disease in these that could adversely affect your implants.

## What to expect

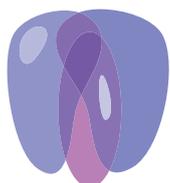
- When patients have their new implant teeth fitted, they occasionally bite their cheeks, lips or tongue when chewing during the first few weeks. Though annoying, this always settles down as you get used to your new teeth.
- Your implant teeth may feel tight against the neighbouring teeth when they are first fitted and a close fit is important to try to reduce food getting caught between the teeth. This will settle after a few days as the teeth adjust. Rarely, a particularly tight implant crown may then become loose after a day or two and need tightening once again. Don't worry, it is not the implant itself but just the attached crown that is loose.
- Unlike the teeth that they replace, implants are not alive and therefore do not have normal sensation. Patients sometimes describe this as the implants feeling slightly 'wooden'. Again, this is something that always settles down as you get used to your new teeth.
- Implants are artificial replacements for teeth, designed to look and function as much like teeth as possible. Because they are artificial, they may never be an absolutely perfect



replacement for your teeth. Though we will always endeavour to produce the very best result possible, patients should have realistic expectations about what can be achieved with implant treatment.

## Cleaning and maintaining your new implants

- Food debris can collect around your natural teeth, and implants are no different. You need to be especially careful to ensure that it is cleaned away effectively.
- Just as natural teeth can develop gum disease, leading to the gradual loss of the supporting bone over the years, finished implants can develop a similar pattern of gradual bone loss if they are not kept very carefully clean. It is essential that you keep your finished implants immaculately clean and you will be instructed on how to do this. Cleaning your implants twice a day with a toothbrush will help to avoid this problem, though many patients will also be advised to use floss and small interdental brushes as well. Bone loss may result in deterioration in the appearance of your implant teeth in the short term, and loosening and failure of the implants in the longer term. You should see a hygienist on a regular basis who will show you how to clean and also check you are doing everything correctly.
- The pink triangles of gum that normally arch up between the necks of teeth, known as the interdental papillae, are the first bits of gum to be lost as a result of gum disease. These papillae are also lost when teeth are removed. Whilst we will do everything possible to give you the best-looking final result with your implant, it is sometimes simply not possible to rebuild these missing papillae once they have been lost. This can result in small triangular spaces between the final implant crowns and the adjacent teeth.
- We will always use the very best materials available for your treatments, but the daily grinding and chewing of often hard and crunchy foods presents a challenging environment for your new implant teeth. Just like natural teeth, the teeth that are fitted onto your implants can occasionally chip or break. Though obviously frustrating for everyone involved, these can usually be repaired or replaced. Please note that there will be a charge for this if the implant teeth are more than 12 months old.
- Once your implants and surrounding soft tissues are seen to be healthy and your new teeth are comfortable and correctly adjusted, it is the quality of your home care, and willingness to come and see us or your dentist for regular maintenance reviews, that will most influence



how long they last. You are in control of your final implant teeth day to day. Despite our efforts during planning and construction, if they are not well maintained at home, you can expect problems to occur just as they would with neglected natural teeth.

- When poorly cared for, implants develop a covering of deposits similar to that found on neglected natural teeth. Left untreated, these can lead to gum infection, bleeding, soreness and general discomfort, just as can occur around natural teeth. Remember, implants, much like natural teeth, will last for as long as you care for them. Well-maintained implants, placed into adequate bone, can be expected to last for many years. However, just as with other surgical implants such as hip replacements, there is no lifetime guarantee.
- Smokers, poorly controlled diabetics and patients who have lost teeth through gum disease have been shown to be more susceptible to a similar condition around implants. For these patients it is very important to have a programme of care with a hygienist and regular reviews with your dentist to monitor home care and possible changes exceptionally carefully.

## Tell us what you think

Now that your treatment with us is complete, I hope that you are happy with the results and I wondered if you would be kind enough to allow us to tell other people of your experience.

We believe that our patients' feedback is really important in ensuring that we provide the best possible service and it is also extremely reassuring and helpful for potential patients to hear of others' experiences. If you feel you could help us in this way I've included a few questions to help you get started, but please feel free to write whatever you like, I would be very grateful.

- What advice would you give others who are considering treatment with dental implants?
- Has this treatment changed your life and if so, in what ways?
- What did you think of our service to you and what was your overall experience of your treatment?
- Would you recommend Dr Franks to others?

Please email your comments to: [info@stephenfranks.dental](mailto:info@stephenfranks.dental)