



Looking after your new dental implants

We hope that you are delighted with your new teeth and that they will give you many years of successful use. The following will address most questions. Please let us know if you would like any additional information.

- Most people find they get used to their new implant teeth very quickly, whilst others find it takes a few months until they feel completely confident to use them like normal teeth.
- We do not charge for any maintenance visits for the first twelve months after fitting so please don't hesitate to come and see us if you are concerned about anything at all.
- Your first review appointment, six months after fitting, is provided by Dr Franks at no charge. After this visit you will need annual reviews of your implants. This can be provided by Dr Franks for a modest fee, or as part of your check up with your regular dentist. This review should include an X-ray of your implant to check for signs of bone loss.
- 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 and develop a new muscle memory.
- Your implant teeth may feel tight against their neighbours when they are first fitted as 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 and this is easily re-tightened.
- 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.
- 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, routine hygienist visits, and a willingness to come and see us or your dentist for regular maintenance reviews, that will most influence the long-term success of your dental implants.** 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.
- Food debris and bacterial plaque will collect around your natural teeth, and implants are no different. Just as natural teeth can develop gum disease, leading to the gradual loss of the supporting bone over the years, dental implants can develop a similar pattern of gradual

bone loss if they are not kept meticulously clean. It is essential therefore that you keep your finished implants immaculately clean.

- Studies show that with good home care and hygienist support implants can last for 20 years or more however about 5% of dental implants will fail during this time. This is normally due to bone loss around the implant. With poor cleaning dental implants can fail in as little as five years, especially if you are a smoker.
- **We strongly recommend that you use an electric toothbrush such as *Braun Oral B* or *Phillips Sonicare* models to brush your teeth, and *TePe* brushes, floss, or interdental sticks to clean in between your teeth.** We also strongly advise dental implant patients to see a hygienist on a regular basis. They will show you how to clean correctly. A regular dental implant patient should see a dental hygienist every six months. Smokers, unstable diabetics, patients with a history of periodontal disease, and patients with multiple dental implants should see the hygienist every three to four months.
- 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.
- Patients with heavy bites or grinding habits (bruxism) should wear a soft night guard when sleeping to protect their teeth. This can be provided by your general dentist for a modest fee.

Scan this QR code to see how to use a *Braun Oral B* electric toothbrush.



Scan this QR code to see how to use a *TePe* interdental brush