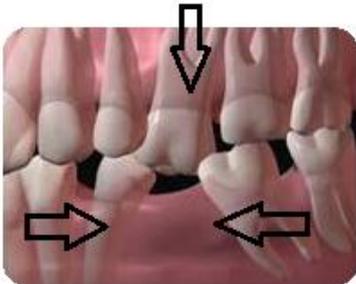


Tooth Replacement

Teeth have many functions which include chewing, aesthetics, speech, and keeping facial muscles in the correct position. Because of these many functions, when a tooth or multiple teeth are lost it can affect one or many of these aspects.

When a front tooth is lost the change in appearance is obvious and usually requires immediate replacement. When a tooth is lost at the back of the mouth the changes are more subtle and the space can often be left there and in a way forgotten as it is not always visible. When a back tooth is lost the peak efficiency is lost and the ability to chew food effectively is reduced by about 10% for each missing tooth. The missing teeth will also place additional strain on the remaining teeth. Front teeth are made for cutting and back teeth are made for chewing. If back teeth are lost it leaves the front cutting teeth to do the chewing. This can create increased stress and fatigue to the remaining teeth which can lead to fractures or wear.

In addition, teeth adjacent to the missing tooth can shift if there is a space available. This can take some time to notice as it is gradual. For example if you lose a lower molar tooth, the opposing tooth (tooth it bites against) on the upper jaw can over erupt vertically into the space. Also the teeth either side of the space can tilt and drift over horizontally into the space of the missing tooth. This in turn affects the alignment of the teeth and exposes the root surface of the teeth that have moved. These areas which are usually underneath your gum line are now more prone to decay and gum disease. It is easier to replace a missing tooth before these changes happen.



The change in alignment of teeth also affects the surrounding muscles. In some cases the facial muscles and cheeks sink into the extraction site affecting self confidence and the ability to speak.

There are three ways to replace missing teeth. They all have advantages and disadvantages that need to be considered. It depends on individual circumstances as to which option is most appropriate.

Partial Dentures

Dentures are the most economical way of replacing teeth. All dentures move a little and need to be removed after eating for cleaning and left out of the mouth overnight to rest the gums. There are two main types of partial dentures.

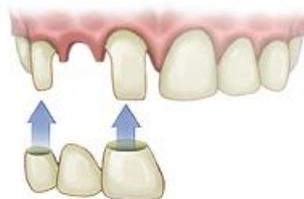


There are acrylic (plastic) dentures with round wire clasps to retain and hold the denture in place. These can be quite thick and bulky which can make them uncomfortable. They are most prone to breakage.

The second type is a metal denture. Because the strength is in the metal they can be smaller and are a neater fit making them more comfortable. They still need to be removed for cleaning.

Bridge

A bridge is fixed and is a good option in a short span, especially where abutment teeth need to be crowned. It would require maintenance with Super Floss. All treatment is done here without surgery.

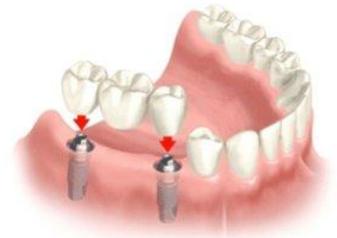


Implants

An Implant is fixed and has the most natural outcome. You would have the ability to floss between your teeth like normal as the adjacent teeth are left undisturbed. Patients must be referred for the surgical stage and then after the healing time return to us for the final crown placement. The total process for an implant is the longest out of all the tooth replacement options however that also means you have the ability to spread the cost over a period of time that is suitable for you.



There is also an option to have implants placed as abutment teeth for a bridge to replace multiple teeth.



If you would like further information on any of these options please don't hesitate to call us and to arrange an appointment.