

Secrets of an Amazing Smile

BY DR. DAVID RUSH, DDS
Family & Cosmetic Dentistry

Q: Dr. Rush, I have a missing tooth and I have heard of dental implants as an alternative to bridges or partials. What exactly are dental implants?

A: A dental implant is an artificial tooth root replacement, usually made of titanium, which is used to support or anchor various dental restorations. They may be used to replace a single tooth or an entire arch of teeth. The most common type of implant used today is referred to as an osseointegrated implant, which means that the bone cells called osteoblasts actually attach to the implant creating a fusion between the bone and the implant.



Q: How do I know if I am a candidate?

A: First we, the patient and I, must determine what type of prosthesis will be fabricated. Only then can the specific implant requirements including number, length, diameter, and even the manufacturer be determined. In other words, the case must be reverse engineered by the restoring dentist with vital input from the patient prior to the surgery. The restoring dentist then consults with the oral surgeon, or periodontist to co-treat the patient. Usually, physical models or impressions of the patient's jawbones and teeth are made by the restoring dentist at the surgeon's request, and are used as physical aids to treatment planning. In addition, advanced computer-assisted tomography or a cone beam CAT scan may be used to achieve the proper treatment plan and ultimately determine if the patient is a candidate. If bone volume or density is inadequate, a bone graft procedure may need to be considered first. Once all options have been fully discussed between patient, surgeon and me, a final treatment plan can be agreed upon.

Q: What is the procedure involved in placing an implant?

A: Implant surgery is typically performed under general anesthesia or local anesthesia by trained and certified clinicians including general dentists, oral surgeons, and periodontists. A single implant procedure takes about an hour, sometimes longer; multiple implants can be installed in a single session lasting several hours. At the conclusion, the patient goes through a period of recovery, and is sent home with a relative or friend.

Q: How long does it take to get my tooth?

A: This is not as easily answered as one might think. There are different approaches to placing dental implants after tooth extraction. These approaches vary depending upon many factors such as the quality and quantity of the patient's bone, whether there was infection present at the time of the extraction, the past experiences of the oral surgeon/periodontist, etc. The most common treatment plan calls for several appointments over a period of months, especially if bone grafting is needed to support implant placements. At the other end of the scale, some patients can be implanted and restored in a single surgery, in a procedure labeled "immediate function," "immediate loading" or "teeth in an hour."

Q: Will my teeth look real?

A: There are a lot of factors involved in having a great outcome but as you can see these definitely look real to me!

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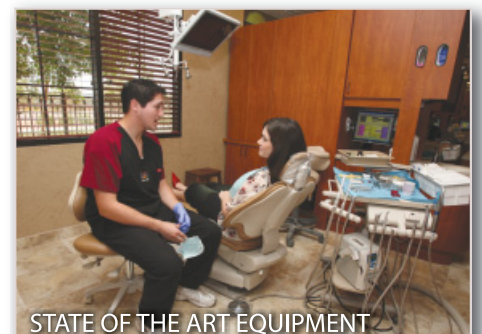
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Dr. David Rush attended Brigham Young University for Undergrad degrees and received his Doctorate from the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Dentistry. After graduation, Dr. Rush and his family moved to Arizona, and opened Ahwatukee Family Dental. Dr. Rush is a member of the Central Arizona Dental Association, Arizona Dental Association, The Dental Organization for Conscious Sedation, The Academy of General Dentistry, and The American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry. Just recently, Dr. Rush opened Fulton Ranch Dental in Chandler, located at 4909 South Alma School Road, Suite 1. You can reach the Chandler office at 480.895.7070. Dr. Rush's Ahwatukee Family Dental office is located at 11022 South 51st Street, Suite 105. The phone number there is 480.893.7674



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