

Dental Implants – Easier Than Ever **By Dr. Richard Stanley**

Millions of Americans are missing one or more teeth due to trauma, decay, gum disease, bite disorders and other factors and many of these people are suffering from a whole host of issues directly related to the missing teeth and changes in their bite. Missing teeth can change a person's looks, speech and ability to eat, neck posture, overall body posture, cause snoring, neck and back pain and severe migraines.

Over the years the ways of replacing teeth have continued to improve. Dramatic technology allows dentists to repair, improve or replace teeth such that they are virtually indistinguishable from natural teeth in both appearance and function. For missing teeth the latest advances in implants provide for more predictable placement of the implants,

Dental implants are man-made replacements for missing teeth or more accurately, replacements for the roots of the missing teeth. They provide a foundation or support for crowns and dentures. Some implants can have crowns or dentures placed on them immediately after the implant is placed but more typically there is a period of weeks or months that allows the bone to integrate tightly around the implant before placement of the teeth over the implant.

Recently, The Smile Centre acquired a specialized CT scan, often called a CAT Scan that provides detailed information about the bone, TMJ joints, sinuses, cervical spine and other important structures of the head and neck. These computerized images can be taken in 20 seconds and with much less radiation exposure than conventional CT scans. They show three dimensional images of bones of the jaws, sinuses, nerves and other structures of the head and allow placement of dental implants with unprecedented accuracy and predictability.

In many cases implants can be placed at the same time teeth are removed. For teeth that are already missing the CT scan provides accurate information about availability and quality of bone in the area to receive the implants. In areas where there is insufficient bone a variety of materials are available for restoring the bone needed for implant placement and improving the healing of the surgical site in general. These technologies provide implant procedures which in many cases have virtually no discomfort during the implant placement or afterwards, little if any swelling and can be done easily with local anesthetic. For people who are apprehensive about dental procedures sedation is available that eliminates people's awareness of even being in a dental office.

Implants are very predictable procedures with 95% to 98% functioning successfully 15 years after placement. They can be used to replace one tooth, replace all missing teeth or provide support for dentures. For people who have worn dentures and had the challenges of loose fitting dentures, food catching or difficulty chewing, the removable dentures can be eliminated and implants and crowns can restore normal function and aesthetics

allowing people to eat their favorite food comfortably and restoring a healthy bite to support the jaws and face.

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