

## 8. Can any dentist perform the implant procedure?

Any dentist who is adequately trained to place or restore dental implants can perform these tasks. In choosing a professional to perform this important procedure, ask how much experience and training he or she has so that you feel comfortable with your doctor. You want someone who has undergone extra training in such areas as implant surgery and restorative dentistry, and who has a proven track record in implant dentistry. This is the expertise level of the doctors performing dental implant procedures at Providence Saint Joseph Medical Center.

## 9. How much does it cost and does insurance cover dental implants?

While implants are initially more expensive than bridges, an implant costs less over the long term since bridges often must be replaced multiple times over a patient's lifetime.

The dental implant surgery and associated prosthetics (implant screw, crown) can cost up to \$5,000 per tooth, plus an additional \$2,500 if bone grafting is required. In addition, there is the cost of the hospital operating room and \$350 for the CT scan which includes a complete upper and lower scan, reading and reporting by one of our radiologists, and the upper and lower Simplant reformation by our specially trained technician. Mini implants are just a fraction of this cost overall. Keep in mind that mini implants are not an optional treatment but rather a completely different type of therapy with different indications.

Medical insurance may pay for implant components if you receive your CT scan and outpatient implant surgery at the hospital. Additionally, some dental insurances are beginning to cover the surgical portion of implant therapy as well as the restorative phase of implant therapy, so it's important to check with your insurance company.

Importantly, Providence Saint Joseph Medical Center and our affiliated dental implant surgeons offer convenient financing programs. If you have Medicare, you may be eligible for additional benefits.

## 10. What are the advantages of having the procedure at Providence Saint Joseph Medical Center?

Safety, comfort, convenience and reduced costs are the key advantages of having your dental implant procedure performed in our hospital setting instead of a dentist's office.

- General anesthesia can be safely used, ensuring that you will feel no discomfort during the procedure.
- Because the surgeon's fees are reduced when the dental implant procedure is done in the hospital, you save money.
- Our state-of-the-art Simplant Guided Surgery equipment makes the procedure faster and less invasive – saving you time, ensuring less pain and faster healing.
- The hospital, CT scans and surgeons are available 24/7, so if you need a dental implant as a result of trauma, treatment can begin right away.
- Our surgeons have decades of experience performing dental implants.

## For More Information

Simply call us to schedule a no-obligation consultation to determine if a dental implant is right for you. We'll answer any additional questions you may have, and discuss a treatment plan tailored to your unique needs and lifestyle. If you decide to proceed, then we'll schedule your planning CT scan and implant surgery at your convenience.

For an appointment, or for more information, please call **1-888-HEALING (1-888-432-5464)**.

### About Providence Saint Joseph Medical Center

Providence Saint Joseph Medical Center (PSJMC), part of Providence Health & Services, is the largest hospital in the San Fernando Valley, providing a comprehensive array of primary care and specialty services. Its core services include oncology, emergency medicine, cardiology, surgery, obstetrics/gynecology, orthopedics and family medicine. PSJMC, founded in 1943, is sponsored by the Sisters of Providence. Visit [www.providence.org/saintjoseph](http://www.providence.org/saintjoseph) for more information.



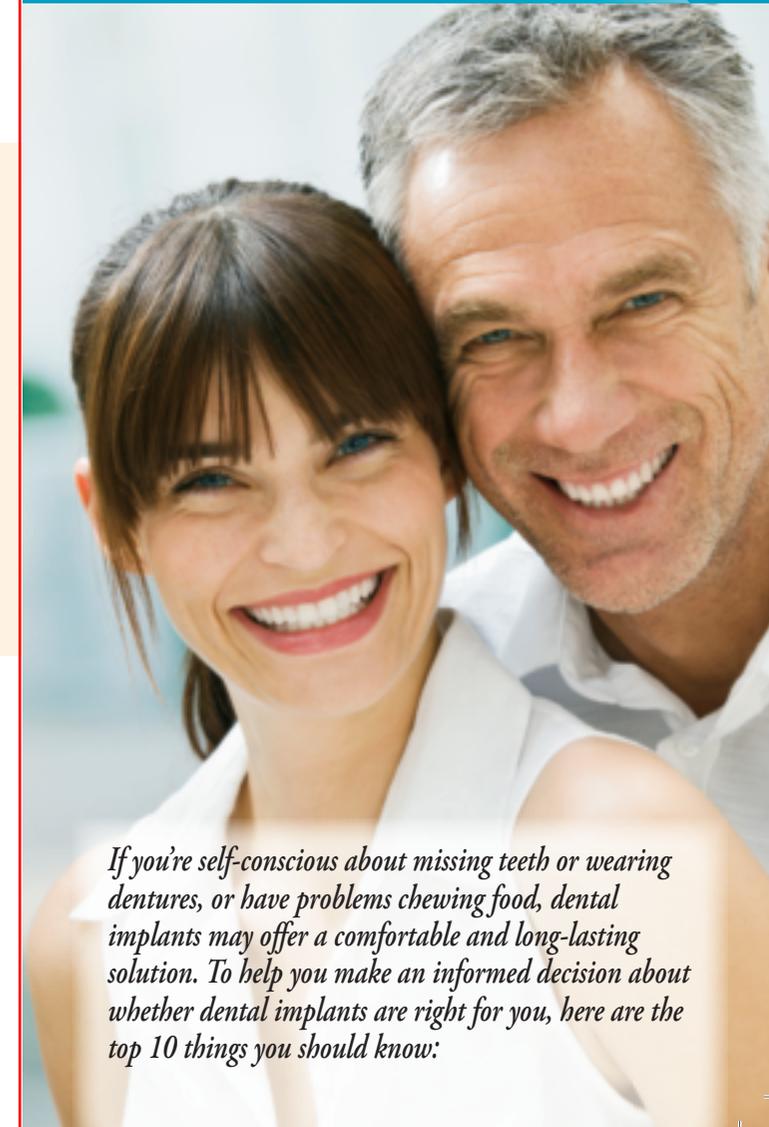
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Implant photos courtesy of Astra Tech



# dental implants

Regain the Confidence of Having Natural Teeth



*If you're self-conscious about missing teeth or wearing dentures, or have problems chewing food, dental implants may offer a comfortable and long-lasting solution. To help you make an informed decision about whether dental implants are right for you, here are the top 10 things you should know:*

# 1. What is a dental implant?

A dental implant is a restorative dentistry option that enables you to replace missing teeth with ones that look, feel and perform like your own. Current dental implant technology is the placement of screw-in titanium root replacements for those that were lost due to one of many causes.



# 2. What are the advantages of dental implants?

While there are several restorative options for missing teeth, including dentures and bridges, none has proved as effective and durable as implants. Dental implants:

- Are the most like natural teeth in how they look, feel and function.
- Allow for the replacement of teeth without involving adjacent teeth, thus preserving more healthy tooth structure.
- Preserve your facial structure because they fuse with the jaw bone, maintaining the bone's architecture and root eminences.
- Do not alter your sense of taste like dentures can.
- Do not slip or make embarrassing noises like dentures can.
- Cannot decay like natural teeth and roots that are anchoring fixed bridges.
- Are as easy to take care of as natural teeth to ensure good oral hygiene.
- Occasionally, mini-implants can be placed to stabilize an ill-fitting lower denture, and the patient can walk out with the implants in and the denture relined in one appointment.

# 3. What is the implant procedure like?

Dental implant treatment generally entails these steps:

First, a pre-implant CT scan (a special x-ray) is taken to assess the condition of the jawbone and plan the placement of the implant(s). If there is not sufficient bone to anchor the implant(s), a bone transplant can be performed to replace the amount of bone lost.



Next, under local anesthesia (light sedation) or general anesthesia, a small-diameter hole (pilot hole) is surgically drilled

at the site(s) of the missing tooth/teeth. The pilot hole is slowly widened to allow for placement of the implant screw. Once the implant screw is placed, a protective cover is placed



on top to allow the site to heal and the dental implant to fuse to the jaw bone – a process called “osseointegration.”



Once healing and osseointegration are complete, the protective cover is removed and the final impressions made for the fabrication of the final restoration, be it a crown, bridge, denture or other prosthetic device.



# 4. How long does the dental implant procedure take?

The surgical procedure (scheduled at a later date), generally takes about an hour for one tooth, and two to three hours for multiple implants. Once the implant is placed, there is a healing period that has to occur which lasts several weeks. During this healing period, osseointegration occurs. Depending on the condition of the bone at the time of surgery, some dental implants can be restored and completed immediately, while others take many weeks. If a bone graft is necessary before the implant can be placed, additional healing time would be required. Keep in mind that every case is unique.

Mini-implants, however, often can be completed in a single day. They are most effectively used to stabilize lower dentures, and also used as transitional implants so that the patient may never have to wear any removable appliance during his or her therapy.

# 5. Is the procedure painful?

Patients literally do not feel any pain during the surgical procedure because of the anesthesia. Any discomfort after the implant procedure is effectively controlled with over-the-counter pain medication. In fact, most patients report that a tooth extraction or root canal is far more uncomfortable than the placement of a dental implant.

# 6. What's the long-term success rate of dental implants?

Dental implantation is one of the most successful treatments in restorative dentistry, with a success rate that approaches 98 percent. The implant structure that is embedded in bone should last a lifetime, with only the crown portion of the implant therapy being susceptible to wear and tear. Failure rates vary depending on the site in the mouth, whether they are placed into natural or grafted bone (natural bone has the highest success rate) and whether the patient smokes (smokers are 2 ½ times more likely to have an implant fail than a non-smoker) or has any para-functional habits. Most companies that make dental implants provide a 5-year warranty, during which time they'll replace the implant and prosthetic components if there's a loss of integration.



# 7. Who is a good candidate for dental implants?

If you are missing teeth, you may be a candidate for a dental implant(s). There is no upper age limit; the minimum age is around 16 to 18 years of age (once facial growth has stopped). Plus, you should be committed to good oral hygiene, and to scheduling regular dental visits.