

# *Implants*

*The idea of a dental implant is nothing new. Back in the time of Cleopatra, the Egyptians would carve seashells to look like teeth and insert them in the socket of a recently lost tooth. Fortunately we've come a long way since then. In fact, in the last 20 years major advancements have been made in dental implants, making them an everyday dental procedure.*

*Today implants are most often titanium cylinders with threads. In simple terms, they are very sophisticated dental screws that go into the jawbone. These titanium screws act as the root of a tooth and are usually about as big around and as long as the root of a natural tooth. The success rate is **95%** or higher.*

*Dental implants can be used to replace a single tooth or any number that is needed. The placement of implants is a relatively simple procedure done with only a local anesthetic (Novocain) and the healing period is usually only a few days.*

*The planning stage is the most critical part for an implant success. Special X-rays are needed to evaluate the jawbone and identify all the important biological landmarks. A clinical examination of the mouth is needed to further understand the individual needs of each patient. Once this is done, the periodontist and general dentist consult with one another to finalize the plans from implant placement to final restoration.*

*Implants are usually placed under the gum line and remain there until the tooth portion is ready to be attached. It takes about 3 months for lower jaw implants to fuse with the bone and 4 to 6 months in the upper. The time difference is due to the density of the bone, which is greater in the lower jaw. Once the bone and implant have integrated together, the general dentist will finish the procedure by making a tooth or teeth that attach to the implants.*

*Taking care of an implant with the attached tooth is no more difficult than cleaning a natural tooth with a crown. An added bonus is that it's impossible to have a cavity on a tooth supported by an implant.*

*Implants have come a long way in a short period of time. With the easy placement techniques and high success rates, dental implants are an option that should be explored when missing teeth need replacement.*