

# Dental Implant Risks & Complications

## The risks of dental implants

At our practice we firmly believe that the numerous benefits of using dental implants to replace a missing tooth far outweigh the risks of dental implants. However, as with any dental or surgical procedure there is always some element of risk, which is why we take our pre-treatment consultation and examination process so seriously. During your dental implant consultation, your specialist will explain any risks or possible complications of dental implant and answer any questions about tooth implants that might concern you.

## The complications of dental implants related to anaesthetic

Tooth implant procedures are performed using local anaesthesia thus removing the risks of dental implants usually associated with general anaesthetic. Local anaesthetic can carry risks including allergic reactions and paraesthesia (when the anaesthetic effect lasts longer than expected) but the dental implant surgeon is well trained in spotting and dealing with potential issues. A detailed medical history will usually clear up possible problems before they occur.

## The health risks of dental implants

Although dental implants are by far the most natural and long lasting of tooth replacement solutions, they are not suitable for everybody. There are some health conditions that preclude the placement of implants, the specialist will explain these to you and answer your questions about the complications of dental implants. Successful tooth replacement surgery relies on a good standard of general health and the risks of treatment failure with dental implants are higher in patients who smoke or those who have diabetes. Poor oral hygiene can cause dental implant complications so any dental decay, gum disease or damaged teeth will need to be treated before tooth replacement can commence.

## Dental implant complications related to surgery

The placement of tooth implants can be done at our practice. This is a surgical procedure because the implants themselves have to be screwed into either the mandible (lower jawbone) or maxilla (upper jawbone). This procedure and following procedures also involve some manipulation of the soft tissues in the gums. Alongside the small chance of infection that all surgical procedures carry, the complications of dental implant include:

- Nerve damage (symptoms might include numbness, tingling or pain)

- Damage to other teeth
- Damage to blood vessels
- Sinus problems (from dental implants in the upper jaw)

At our in London all of our patients take part in a thorough consultation and examination process before dental implant placement. At this point, they get the opportunity to ask questions about the risks of dental implants. Our surgeries take place in the appropriate, sterile environment and all of our patients are encouraged to commit to on-going preventative oral hygiene appointments.

## The possible longer-term complications of dental implants

Less than 1% of dental implants fail and most of our patients finish treatment totally satisfied with the results. Even where placement is not successful the first time, steps can usually be taken to ensure subsequent success and the replacement of a missing tooth. Long-term complications of dental implant might include:

- A lack of bone in the implant area. The longer a tooth has been missing, the less bone there will be in that area. This issue will be usually be picked up by our consultation process and does not necessarily mean that dental implants cannot eventually be placed. Bone volume can be increased via bone grafts or sometimes the implant site can be made suitable by skilful manipulation.
- Movement of dental implants before osseointegration has occurred. When we break a limb, we immobilise it in order to allow new bone growth to heal the fracture. Tooth implants work in a similar way and are vulnerable to disturbance whilst remodelling of the bone occurs. Implants are not stable when they are first inserted and will require some protection.

Many of the risks of dental implants shown above are entirely avoidable and at our clinic in London we believe our level of expertise and experience minimise dental implant complications.

Summary of possible complications – Pain, swelling, infection, bruising, damage to adjacent teeth or restorations, failure of the implant to take, loosening or mobility of the implant, bone loss and receding gums

Very rare complications include – fracture of the implant, post or crown.