The aim of this information sheet is to help answer some of the questions you may have about having a dental implant. It explains the benefits, risks and alternatives of the procedure.

**What is a dental implant?**

Dental implants are artificial replacements for your missing tooth that are placed within the bone of your jaw to help support either crowns, dentures or bridges. Implants should provide you with a long lasting tooth replacement if they are cared for in the same way that teeth should be cared for.

**What happens during the placement of a dental implant?**

Treatment is normally divided into 2 or 3 stages.

Pre-operative assessment

Before implants can be placed, X-rays and impressions of your mouth will be needed. These allow us to plan your treatment.

Stage one treatment (Implant placement)

The next stage of your treatment is to insert the implant. This is normally done under local anaesthetic (an injection which makes the area where we are working numb) by lifting the gum away from the underlying bone, then gently and carefully drilling into the jaw bone. The implant is inserted into the bone and the gum is replaced and held together with some stitches. The stitches dissolve about 1 – 2 weeks later.

Following insertion, the surgeon will decide if the implant can have the healing cap fitted on the same day. If not we will place this 3 – 4 months later, so a second small surgical procedure would be required (as the implant will be buried under the gum).

Stage Two (Restorative treatment)

You will need either 2 – 4 appointments depending on your type of restoration (crown/bridge/denture). This will include taking impressions and checking the fit of the parts used to make your replacement teeth.

The implant treatment will be carried out by your own dentist, under the supervision of Tipton Trainings dentists.

**What are the benefits – why should I have dental implants?**

Dental implants can be very useful where we would otherwise have to crown healthy teeth or where a denture or bridge would be difficult or sometimes impossible because there are no suitable teeth or gums for support.

**What are the risks?**

There is a small risk that the implants may not fuse properly with the bone in your mouth. The risk is higher in certain individuals, particularly those who smoke. Implant placement involves surgery in your mouth and so may be followed by some soreness, swelling, bleeding or bruising. Any discomfort is usually controlled with simple painkillers and should only last a few days.

It is possible for parts of your implants to loosen or wear out with time. You will be responsible for the long term care of your implants.

Some patients who require implants do not have sufficient bone. In these circumstances, it may be necessary to carry out a bone graft. This involves more surgery and associated swelling, bruising and pain. With a bone graft, treatment may take 3 – 6 months longer (see our information sheet on bone grafts).

**Are there any other alternatives?**

The available treatment options will vary a lot from person to person and so will be discussed with you at your assessment.

These may include no treatment, preparing other teeth for crowns and bridges or dentures.

**How can I prepare for a dental implant?**

Please make sure you have told us about any problems with your health and about any tablets or medicines you are taking.

If you are a smoker we strongly advise you to quit and remain a non-smoker in the long term. This will significantly reduce the risk of some implant complications. You can contact the free NHS smoking helpline on 0800 022 4322.

**Asking for your consent**

We want to involve you in all the decisions about your care and treatment. If you decide to go ahead with treatment, you will be asked to sign a consent form. This confirms that you agree to have the procedure and understand what it involves.

We will inform you about your planned treatment in detail before we start. However, there are times during treatment when we change the planned treatment. If this is necessary we will make sure that you are told and give you the choice as to whether you proceed with this treatment. If you are having sedation, we will discuss all possible alternative treatments with you in advance.

**Will I feel any pain?**

The level of discomfort is variable and generally only requires painkillers, such as paracetamol or ibuprofen.

**What happens after the procedure?**

If you have had the procedure under local anaesthesia you will be able to leave the clinic as soon as the procedure has been completed. You should be able to eat normally after the surgery but a soft diet may be advised. You should avoid alcohol for 24 hours.

**What do I need to do after I go home?**

You should be able to return to work within a day of treatment. Occasionally you may not be able to wear your dentures for up to two weeks after the surgery (**the supervising dentist will advise you**).

**Will I have a follow-up appointment?**

You will be seen by your own dentist, usually about 1 week after the procedure to check on your stitches and everything is healing well.

**Cleaning**

Successful oral surgery depends on keeping your mouth as clean as possible. You should also clean your other teeth as normal but avoid brushing the surgical site for the first few days. Then begin to carefully clean this area with a toothbrush, once the tenderness subsides. Hot salt mouthwashes are beneficial for healing in the first week.

**If I had gum disease when I had my own teeth, will I get it with the implants?**

Yes, if you don't care for them well enough. If you keep them clean and have them regularly checked by your dental team you should not have any problems. Smoking also affects the health of implants. So, if you smoke, you may need to look after your implants more carefully.

**Aftercare**

You will need to see your dentist for regular check-ups and hygiene appointments to maintain your implants.

Any Questions please feel to call us on 01206 769695