

MISSING TEETH

When teeth are missing due to an accident, tooth decay or congenitally missing (not present at birth), these teeth may need to be replaced through your family dentist at the completion of orthodontic treatment. He/she may refer you to a Prosthodontist who specializes in tooth replacement, or a Periodontist or Oral surgeon for placement of appropriate implants. The cost for this tooth replacement is the responsibility of the patient/parent and is not included in the orthodontic treatment fee.

During the course of orthodontic treatment, it will be determined whether teeth will be moved to replace the missing tooth/teeth, with the potential of leaving spaces further back in the mouth, or provide appropriate space for future prosthetics (tooth replacement). Once it is determined that the space will be regained for tooth replacement, you will be advised to contact your family dentist to discuss the type of tooth replacement that is best suited for you/your family member. Your family dentist or specialist will then determine the size of space required for tooth replacement. When the jaw structure allows, we will do our best to provide the recommended space. Please be aware that this may be difficult to achieve due to the long-standing original position of the neighboring teeth. Any such limitations will be brought to your attention. A stable non-growing skeletal environment is also an essential requirement for the placement of an implant at the completion of orthodontic treatment.

If the missing tooth/teeth are one of the upper front six teeth, a removable retainer with an artificial tooth/teeth attached will be fitted upon completion of orthodontic treatment, until such time that permanent replacement may be provided by your family dentist or specialist. If the missing teeth are in the posterior region of the mouth, the retainer will have an acrylic space maintainer/filler rather than an acrylic tooth. This retainer must be worn as directed by Dr. McSweeney in order that space is not lost. Failure to wear the appliance will lead to space loss. Future regaining of the space including the use of orthodontic appliances/braces may be required. This will be at an additional cost. Please note that if this retainer breaks or needs replacement, additional charges may apply.

IMPLANTS

Implants consist of a surgically placed titanium root structure and a ceramic or porcelain crown.

Implants can only be placed once the patient has completed all skeletal growth. An implant placed too early will appear to sink or settle as the surrounding teeth erupt to compensate for further growth of the jaws.

For the non-growing adult, the process of tooth replacement may commence as early as three months after the completion of treatment. This will be determined in consultation with your family dentist.

A retreatment fee will apply if space is lost or tooth/teeth positions have changed, after treatment. With regular wear of the retainer as recommended, the loss if any should be slight. Although there may be a recommended space or size for a specific implant, (incisor, bicuspid or molar), this is not always achievable due to the long standing positions of teeth prior to treatment or due to forward drift of the unerupted teeth adjacent to the space of a missing tooth. In many cases restoration of the full amount of space will result in exaggerated tipping of the adjacent teeth as they are spread out to accommodate the replacement tooth. There is a finite semicircle of bone available to the tooth roots and only a moderate amount of expansion is practical. Increasing available space also creates considerable stretch of the gum tissue, which becomes the elastic force for relapse or post treatment loss of space. During space regaining the teeth will travel through the bone but the gum tissue will only be stretched. This stretch will want to return teeth to their original position after treatment.

In addition, the roots of the teeth adjacent to the space of the missing tooth may be tipped away from the space to give a margin of safety for the eventual placement of the implant. This tip may cause a slight change in the angulation of the visible portion of the tooth. This will only be done if necessary where available space is at the minimum.

The results of a study of individuals missing both of their upper second incisors indicates that the upper central incisors will be slightly wider than average. These teeth may be slightly narrowed or reduced in width without cosmetic penalty as a way of making additional space.

It is the patient/parent's responsibility to consult with your family dentist to schedule appointments following orthodontic treatment so that permanent tooth replacement can be provided as soon as practical and convenient. It is very difficult to hold space over an extended period of time, therefore the sooner the better when possible.

My staff or myself will be happy to discuss the process of tooth replacement/implant therapy with you. Please contact the office and an appointment can be arranged.

Disclosure: The aforementioned information has been provided as a courtesy to our patients, providing you with necessary information when it is time to discuss tooth replacement with your family dentist. There is no financial or commercial interest whatsoever to Dr. McSweeny in the fabrication and placement of the implants.