

# What Are the Different Types of Dental Implants?

Dental implants as we know them today were invented in 1952 by a Swedish orthopedic surgeon named Per-Ingvar Brånemark. Today, they are considered the standard of care for prosthetic replacement of missing teeth in dentistry.

A dental implant is a surgical fixture that is placed into the jawbone and allowed to fuse with the bone over the span of a few months. The dental implant acts as a replacement for the root of a missing tooth. In turn, this "artificial tooth root" serves to hold a replacement tooth or bridge. Having a dental implant fused to the jawbone is the closest thing to mimicking a natural tooth because it stands on its own without affecting the nearby teeth and has great stability.



Dental implants can be used to replace a single tooth, several teeth, or all of the teeth. The goal of teeth replacement in dentistry is to restore function as well as esthetics.

When it comes to tooth replacement, generally, there are three options:

- (1) removable dental appliance (complete denture or partial denture)
- (2) fixed dental bridge (cemented), and
- (3) dental implant.

Dentures are the more affordable option for replacement teeth but are the least desirable because of the inconvenience of a removable appliance in the mouth. Furthermore, dentures can affect one's taste and sensory experience with food. Dental bridgework was the more common restorative option prior to the relatively recent shift to dental implant treatment.



## WHEN WOULD SOMEONE NEED A DENTAL IMPLANT?

Implant surgery can be performed by any licensed dentist provided that the treatment follows the standard of care and is in the best interest of the patient. However, since implants are surgically placed in the jawbone, dental specialists who routinely perform surgery within the jawbone are the natural fit for implant surgery. Oral maxillofacial surgeons (oral surgeons) treat all hard and soft-tissue diseases or defects, which includes extraction of teeth and jaw surgeries. Periodontists treat disease of the surrounding structures of teeth such as the gum and jawbone. Both oral surgeons and periodontists often specialize in dental implant placement.



## WHAT TYPES OF DOCTORS SPECIALIZE IN DENTAL IMPLANTS?

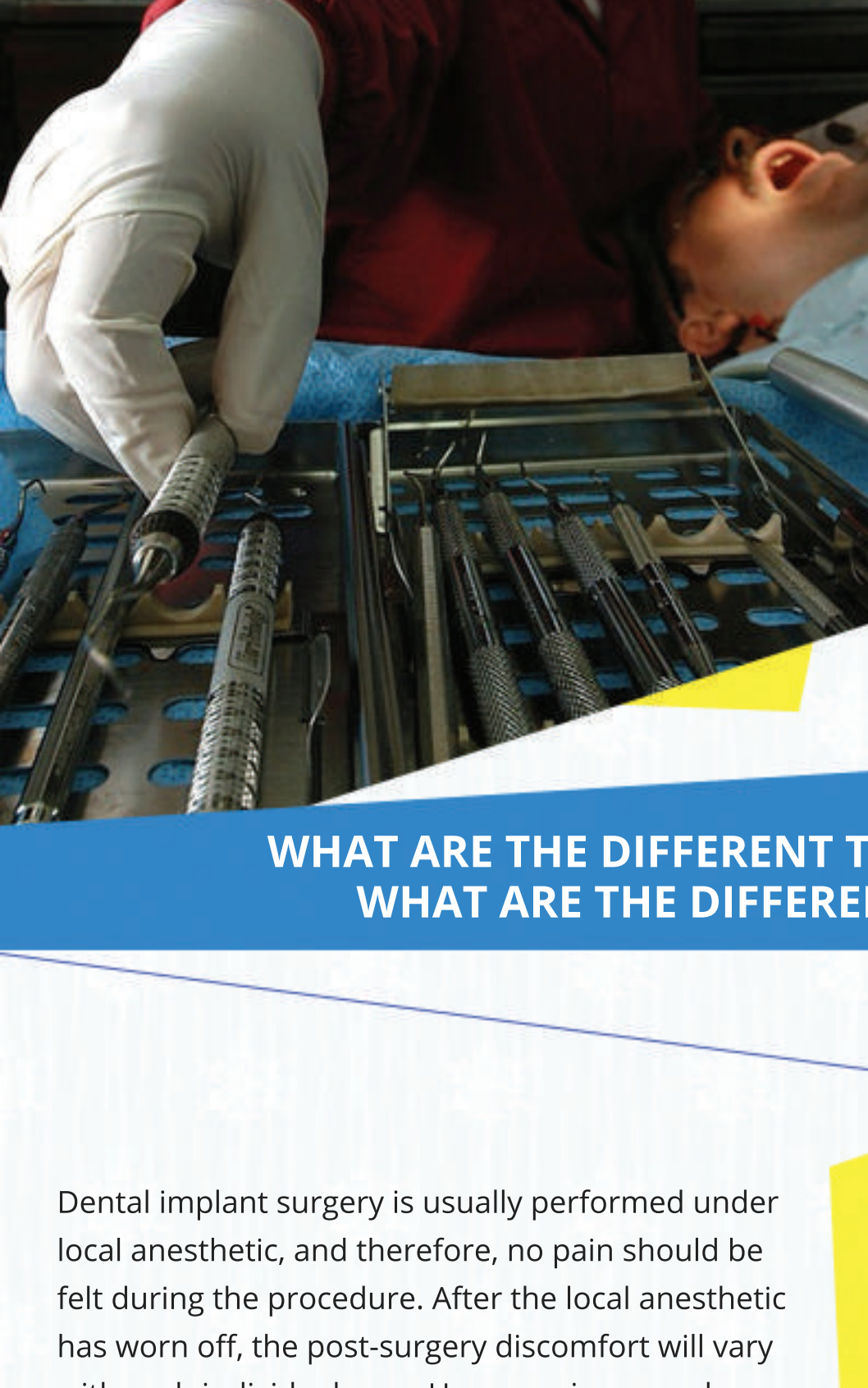
Historically, there have been two different types of dental implants:

- (1) endosteal and
- (2) subperiosteal.

Endosteal refers to an implant that is "in the bone," and subperiosteal refers to an implant that rests on top of the jawbone under the gum tissue.

Subperiosteal implants are no longer in use today because of their poor long-term results in comparison to endosteal dental implants.

Due to their stability, dental implants can be used to support a removable denture and provide a more secure and comfortable fit. In addition, for orthodontics procedures, dental mini-implants can act as temporary anchorage devices (TAD) to help move teeth to a desired position. These mini-implants are small and temporarily fixed to bone while assisting in anchorage for teeth movement.



## WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF DENTAL IMPLANTS? WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT USES FOR IMPLANTS?

Dental implant surgery is usually performed under local anesthetic, and therefore, no pain should be felt during the procedure. After the local anesthetic has worn off, the post-surgery discomfort will vary with each individual case. However, in general, most people will feel discomfort similar to a tooth extraction afterward. A cold ice pack is placed on skin over the area of surgery immediately after treatment to help reduce swelling. This pain typically can be managed with over-the-counter pain medications such as ibuprofen (Advil) or acetaminophen (Tylenol). More invasive surgery may require a stronger prescription pain medication and more recovery time.



## WILL SOMEONE FEEL PAIN WHEN GETTING A DENTAL IMPLANT?



During the consult and planning stage, the dental surgeon will visually examine the site in the mouth where a dental implant is being considered as well as look at dental imaging studies (X-rays, panoramic films, and/or CT scans). At this time, the quality and quantity of jawbone is assessed to determine if more bone is needed at the site. Once it has been established that a dental implant can be placed in the desired location, the patient will return for surgical procedures for the dental implant(s). During all surgical procedure appointments, patient is usually given local anesthetic to numb the surgical area as well as any other sedatives necessary for comfort and anxiety.

The first stage of oral surgery often involves a tooth or teeth extraction. Oftentimes, the site of a dental implant still has an existing damaged tooth present. In order to prepare for placement of a dental implant, the tooth will need to be extracted. More often than not, an "alveolar bone graft" (cadaver or synthetic bone) is placed to achieve a solid base of bone for the implant.

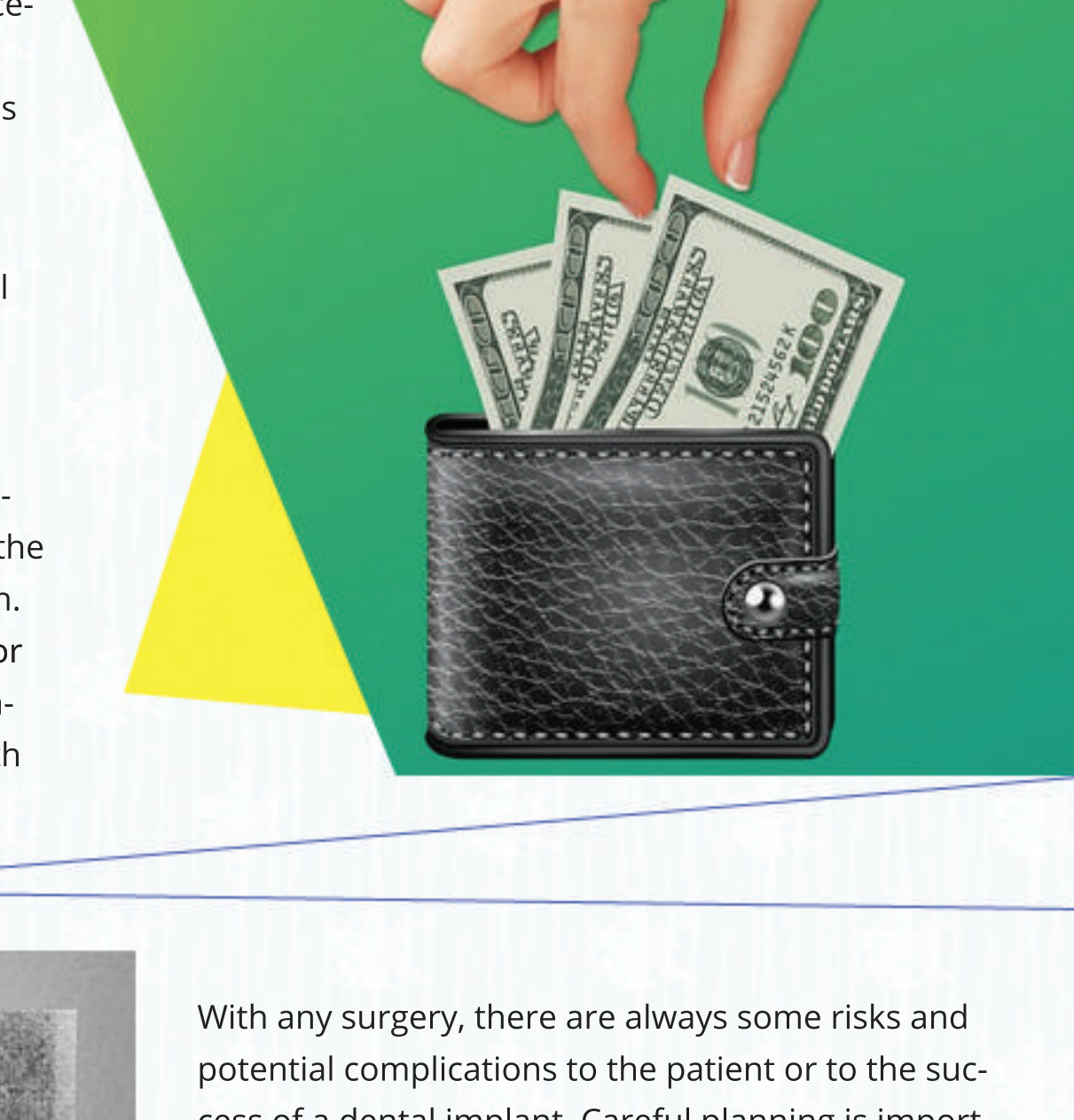
## WHAT IS THE PROCEDURE FOR GETTING A DENTAL IMPLANT?

## HOW MUCH DOES A DENTAL IMPLANT COST? DOES INSURANCE PAY FOR DENTAL IMPLANTS?

The cost of a single dental implant can vary depending on the region and who is performing the procedure. A conservative cost estimate for a single dental implant is \$3,000-\$4,500. This cost includes the surgery for placement of an implant, all the components, and the implant crown.

Dental insurance typically does not pay for dental implant placement. Some dental insurances may help pay for the implant crown portion. Unfortunately, in many cases, dental insurance considers dental implants to be an elective procedure even though dental implants have become the standard of care for replacement of missing teeth.

Tooth replacement because they offered a conservative approach and provide predictable results with success rates close to 98%.



With any surgery, there are always some risks and potential complications to the patient or to the success of a dental implant. Careful planning is important to ensure that a patient is healthy enough to undergo oral surgery and heal properly. Just like any oral surgery procedure, bleeding disorders, infections, allergies, existing medical conditions, and medications need careful review prior to proceeding with treatment. Fortunately, the success rate is quite high and failures usually occur in the unlikely event of infection, fracture of the dental implant, overloading of the dental implant, damage to the surrounding area (nerves, blood vessels, teeth), poor positioning of the dental implant, or poor bone quality or quantity. Again, careful planning with a qualified surgeon can help avoid these problems. In many cases, another attempt can be made to replace a failed dental implant after the requisite time for healing has taken place.

## WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL RISKS, COMPLICATIONS, AND PROBLEMS WITH A DENTAL IMPLANT?

Dental implants have the risk of developing a condition called "peri-implantitis," which is the equivalent of periodontal (gum) disease for natural teeth. This refers to inflammation of the gum and bone surrounding the implant. The inflammation of the surrounding tissues is often due to excessive biting forces on the implant or bacterial infection. Peri-implantitis can result in the loss of an implant if left untreated. After getting a dental implant, routine maintenance care at home and follow-up at the dental office are essential in avoiding this condition. Good oral hygiene for a dental implant at home involves routine brushing and flossing to keep food debris and plaque away. In the dental office, the surrounding soft and hard tissues are examined and special tools are used to remove harder calcified deposits around the dental implant. If needed, the bite is adjusted to ensure that the implant does not sustain heavy biting forces.



## WHAT FOLLOW-UP CARE IS NECESSARY AFTER GETTING A DENTAL IMPLANT?

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