

OPTIONS TO REPLACE MISSING TEETH (Please refer to indicative pictures overleaf)

Teeth may be missing for a number of reasons - decay, gum disease or trauma from an accident or quite simply that, they never came through. There are different methods available to replace missing teeth. You may want to replace teeth to improve appearance or to be able to chew more efficiently.

Before having any teeth replaced your existing teeth should be in a stable condition and your cleaning regime at home must be of an excellent standard – the dental team will help you to achieve this. It is also crucial that patients understand that good plaque control and optimal oral health are necessary for any dental treatment to succeed. In fact, there is emerging evidence that gum disease may affect other systemic diseases such as diabetes, heart problems etc. Without good plaque control, most dental treatments will carry increased risks of complications and failure. This cannot be overstated. The options mentioned below may not be suitable for your individual case. Following a detailed assessment and further investigations, the dentist will discuss the options to replace missing teeth in your mouth or refer you for specialist advice within the practice if necessary.

No replacement If a single tooth has been lost at the back of your mouth, and it does not affect your appearance or ability to chew, you may choose not to replace the tooth. However, you should be aware that the adjacent teeth may tip, rotate or over-erupt into the gaps. These adverse movements may go unnoticed and can be quite complex and expensive to reverse them later on.

Removal partial denture This option is usually used when one or more teeth are lost. A removable partial denture (RPD) consists of acrylic teeth and acrylic gums to replace the gum tissue. The denture can either have acrylic (Option 1B) or metal (Option 2A) framework. The latter can be more hygienic in some cases and may also be recommended when higher strength is required. Treatment will involve several sessions to take moulds of your teeth, to measure the bite and to try-in the dentures before finally fitting them. The advantages of dentures are they can be easily removed for cleaning. Little or no preparation of your remaining teeth is necessary. Metal dentures may need some tooth preparations of adjacent existing teeth or alteration of the shape with restorations to enhance guide planes to improve retention and/or facilitate path of withdrawal. Design of the framework will vary for each individual case.

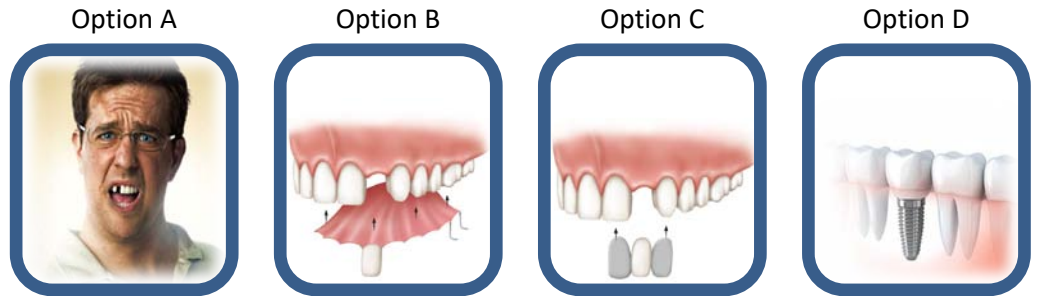
Bridges These are usually only suitable to replace 1 or 2 missing teeth. Conventional bridges (Option 2B) are when adjacent teeth to the missing space are prepared for crowns. Dental laboratory will then make crowns on the prepared teeth and piggy backs an artificial tooth (pontic) for the missing tooth/teeth. As the technique requires making crowns on adjacent teeth, it can be quite invasive and not warranted unless a crown is justified for a different reason. For example, if the tooth has a large restoration anyway which requires a crown. A less invasive technique involves no or little tooth preparation relies on bonding a metal wing which is attached at the back of a tooth and to support an artificial tooth (pontic) off it. This is called an adhesive bridge (Option 1C).

Implants Please refer to implant information pack for further details. Implants are titanium screws put into the jaw bone to replace roots of the lost teeth. Implants can be used to replace a single tooth-using a single crown placed on top of the implant (Option 1D). This is therefore called an implant retained crown consisting of three parts; the implant (the part embedded in the bone equivalent to a root, an abutment (second piece screwed into the implant equivalent to a post/core in a natural tooth) and a crown (the part that looks like a tooth). However, a “dental implant” is a commonly used term to mean the three things together.

For several missing teeth a bridge (Options 2C for one or two missing teeth or 3C for all missing teeth) or an implant retained denture for all missing teeth (Option 3B) can be used. “All on 4” by NobelBiocare is one example of a full-arch, fixed replacement for the missing teeth. Other companies have different names for it. The implant procedures may involve several months of healing time-to ensure the implant has properly fused to the bone.

As mentioned above, apart from using implants to provide fixed bridges they may also be used to retain/support over dentures. The latter method can be useful for those patients who do not have enough bone to support several implants or may wish to reduce surgery and costs. They will still benefit from a secure “attached” denture. Regarding restoring toothless lower jaw (edentulous mandible), a panel of experts (McGill Consensus) found that “There is now overwhelming evidence that a two-implant overdenture should be the first-choice treatment for the edentulous mandible” (Option 3B). Such improvements may have a positive impact on general health, particularly senior adults.

1. How to replace a missing tooth?



Option A Accept the gap

- + Least intervention required
- Not aesthetically pleasing
- Difficult to speak/eat
- Can get unwanted

Option B Denture

- + A 'Removable' option
- Easy to clean
- Harder to tolerate
- bulky

Option C Bridge

- + A 'fixed' option
- Restore function and aesthetics
- Not suitable for long span
- Metal shine through on adjacent teeth

Option D Implant

- + Fixed replacement
- Stand-alone restoration
- Surgical procedure
- Relatively more expensive initially

2. How to replace multiple missing teeth?



Option A Denture

- + A 'Removable' option
- Easy to clean
- Harder to tolerate
- Can affect taste

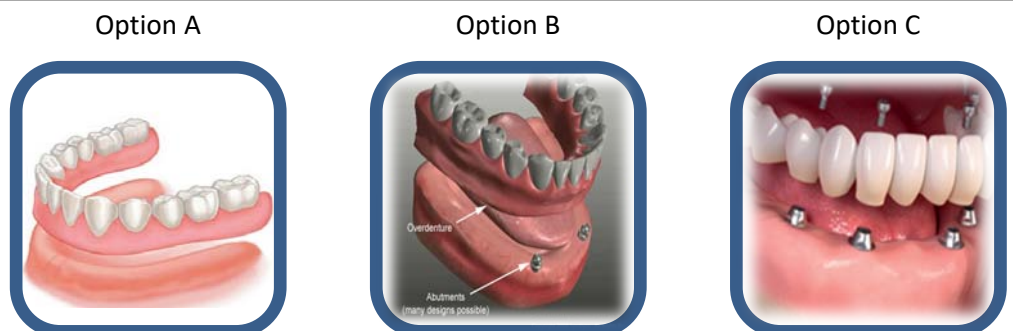
Option B Conventional bridge

- + A 'fixed' option
- Restore function and aesthetics
- Not suitable if span is too long
- Need to cut adjacent teeth

Option C Implant supported bridge

- + No damage to adjacent teeth
- Superior function and aesthetics
- Surgical procedure
- Relatively more expensive initially

3. How to replace all missing teeth?



Option A Complete denture

- + A 'Removable' option
- Easy to clean
- Can feel bulky in the mouth

Option B Implant retained (attached) denture

- + A 'Removable' option
- Easy to clean
- Surgical procedure

Option C Fixed bridge on Implants

- + A 'fixed' option
- More secure and comfortable
- Surgical procedure