



DENTURES VS. DENTAL IMPLANTS

PROS & CONS OF EACH



According to the American Academy of Implant Dentistry 30 million Americans are missing all of their teeth in one or both jaws. If you are in this situation you may be considering replacing the missing teeth with dentures or dental implants. Let's review the pros and cons of each.

Advantages of Dentures

- Dentures are less costly than implants, making them the most affordable option for most patients.
- Many people choose to start with dentures. Since they are less expensive a patient may try them out and see how they feel.
- If you have just had teeth removed recently, starting with dentures will allow your body time to heal before considering implants.
- Depending on the location of the missing teeth, dentures may be a perfect solution. (Patients often find upper dentures look good and are easy to wear.)
- The process to create the dentures is non-invasive. No surgery required.
- If additional teeth are lost in the future, it is easy to modify the dentures to accommodate the loss.

Disadvantages of Dentures

- They do not quite look as natural as dental implants.
- They must be removed and thoroughly cleaned regularly. Many patients find the cleaning of cups and adhesives undesirable because they are messy and expensive.
- Dentures are not worn overnight.
- Sometimes dentures slip around making it difficult to speak and eat.
- Certain foods cannot be eaten with dentures. Examples include caramel, apples and corn on the cob.
- There's an increased risk of gum disease if food is trapped by the dentures.
- They frequently need replacement (every 3 to 6 years compared to 20+ years for dental implants). Also, they'll break if dropped, requiring replacement.
- Partial dentures are known to weaken the adjacent natural teeth that provide support for the dentures.

Advantages of Implants

- They're easy to care for. Just brush and floss as you do your natural teeth.
- Implants look and feel like natural teeth since the root and tooth is replaced.
- Implants allow you to eat any food including things that are sticky and crunchy.
- Dental implants don't affect speech.
- Bones and adjacent teeth are preserved. Further deterioration is not a problem. They're less likely to require future dental procedures.
- With proper care, dental implants will last for decades.

Disadvantages of Implants

- They can be expensive, with single implants costing up to \$4,000 per tooth.
- Implants require surgery to install and generally have a lengthy healing process.

At the end of the day, your dentist is your best resource to help you decide what option is best for you and your mouth. Keep in mind that you may decide to start with dentures and eventually progress to implants, but implants are a more permanent option. But both implants and dentures are a big investment. So regardless of which you pick, make sure you have the best dental insurance possible.

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