

Who is a Candidate for Dental Implants?

Evaluate

When evaluating a dental implant candidate, Dr. Singletary examines a multitude of factors to determine the long-term prognosis of the implant.

Healing & Medication Primarily, an excellent candidate will be able to heal well, will not be taking long-term medication that could have a negative effect on bone metabolism (the ability of bone to heal). Long-term medication for autoimmune disease often has a negative effect upon bone volume.

Additionally, patients with diabetes and hyper/hypothyroidism will be carefully evaluated. Poorly controlled diabetes causes sugar levels to fluctuate, weakening the immune system and slowing bone metabolism. Unregulated hyper/hypothyroidism inflicts comparable harm on the patient's prognosis for similar reasons.

Health History Existing periodontal disease is another variable to evaluate because an implant will be less viable if the candidate is simultaneously battling other oral diseases. Dr. Singletary will also consider past gum disease and tooth loss. The ideal patient will have had minimal periodontal disease or is actively pursuing treatment for the disease.

For patients that smoke, that is also a consideration for the success or failure of an implant. Nicotine slows bone metabolism causing it to heal less efficiently. Additionally, the jawbone needs to be sturdy, have sufficient width, height and depth for the implant. Once the x-ray has been taken, Dr. Singletary will determine the bone's ability to heal. X-rays can help determine these final factors, however sometimes 3-D imaging is necessary.

Success

Increase Success Although the above factors weigh heavily upon a patient's prognosis, there are ways a non-ideal candidate can increase their chances of a successful outcome. The patient can boost the probability of a successful implant by getting periodontal disease under control, minimizing the use of anti-inflammatory medication and refraining from smoking. In certain cases, Dr. Singletary can perform bone augmentation to achieve better bone volume for the implant. Furthermore, we recommend that candidates with health problems get a physical to manage controllable factors such as sugar levels, thyroid, etc. Occasionally we require a medical physician's permission for the implant procedure. Dr. Singletary and the patient must both consider the risks unique to each patient so that we can alleviate potentially compromising factors prior to the procedure.





Long-Term Success The patient must keep the implant free of bacteria by consistent removal of plaque from the neck of the implant through both home and professional cleaning. Patients should floss the implant post by wrapping the tooth with floss and buffing up and down side to side.

The patient should avoid trauma to the implant site: crunching ice, biting nails or excessive gum chewing. While the natural tooth has ligaments that attach the root surface to the jaw bone to keep the tooth stable,

the implant doesn't have that ligament; the extra pressure from biting can affect the integration of the implant surface to the bone.

Summary

In summary, many risk factors must be assessed and, if necessary, mitigated before Dr. Singletary can determine if a patient will be a viable candidate: the ability to heal, medications, health history (diabetes, periodontal disease) nicotine consumption, as well as sufficient jaw bone around the implant area. Lastly, the patient can also ensure the continued health of the implant by consistently cleaning the implant site and avoiding trauma from occlusion.

