

Dental Implants

Your Best Option for Replacing Missing Teeth

Dental implants are the gold standard in modern dentistry for tooth-replacement—whether you need one tooth, several teeth, or a full set of new teeth. Why is this option preferred above all others?

For one thing, a decades-long track record has proven dental implants to be the longest-lasting, most natural-looking, and best-functioning substitute for natural teeth. They have a lifetime success rate above 95% — the highest of any tooth replacement option. Dental bridgework, by contrast, will usually need to be replaced within 10 to 20 years.

Dental implants can also help maintain the health of the jawbone. Studies have shown they do this by preventing the bone loss that normally occurs when even one tooth is lost. Wearing removable dentures, on the other hand, actually accelerates bone loss.

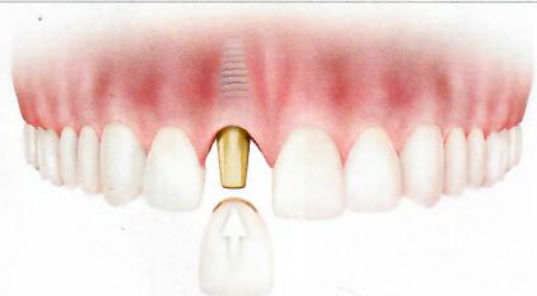
Many of the benefits of dental implants stem from the fact that bone cells in the jaw securely attach to them, unlike other options. This means there's no slippage or other movement (which can occur with removable dentures), no problems with eating the foods you really like, and less likelihood of needing periodic repair or replacement (as bridges and removable dentures usually require). Let's look a little closer at the tiny devices that make these big advantages possible.



What Is a Dental Implant?

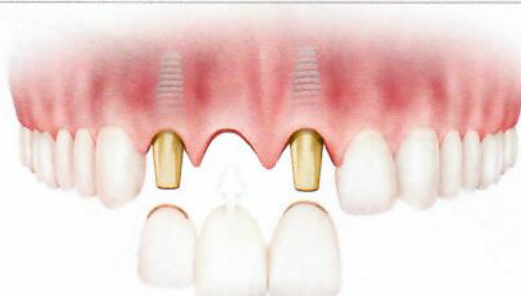
A dental implant is a small titanium post placed in the bone beneath the gums, where it can serve as a replacement tooth root. Titanium is osteophilic (bone-loving), which means bone cells will attach to and integrate with it. The implant body often includes ridges or threads that also help it anchor to the bone. Implants provide an immovable support for the natural-looking replacement teeth attached to them.

Dental Implant Treatment Options



Replacing a Single Tooth

A single implant is ideal for replacing individual missing teeth. An implant-supported replacement tooth looks and feels natural and is healthier for adjacent teeth than either a partial denture or a fixed bridge.



Replacing Multiple Teeth

When 3 teeth in a row are missing, 2 implants can be used to create a bridge that esthetically and functionally replaces the missing teeth without damaging adjacent natural teeth.

Khartoon

When media executive Khartoon learned that her fractured front tooth could not be saved, she worried about how it would affect her career. “The industry I work in is very much relationally driven face-to-face. It’s devastating to think you’re not going to look like yourself because of something you couldn’t control.” Fortunately, an implant-supported replacement tooth was the perfect solution. “The procedure went so well, and my new tooth looks fantastic!” She would recommend the procedure to others “one million percent.”

“My new tooth looks fantastic!”





Replacing All Teeth

A fixed denture (one that doesn't need to come out of the mouth) can be supported by 4-6 implants to replace up to 12 teeth, re-establishing proper esthetics and function in an amazingly lifelike way.



Supporting Removable Dentures

Dental implants can be used to create a supporting bar for a removable over-denture. This option provides the same esthetics as a fixed denture, but it comes at a significant cost savings.

Chris

Chris, a 63-year-old business owner and former heavy smoker, lost his teeth due to advanced gum disease. "I tried to wear dentures," he said, "but it was depressing." However, since replacing all his upper teeth and several bottom teeth with dental implants, he now has a beautiful smile and can eat anything. When he first saw his new teeth in the mirror, "It brought tears to my eyes. I couldn't ask for a better smile." He joked, "I might get a book deal or even a movie!"

"I couldn't ask for a better smile."



The Dangers of Removable Dentures

Removable dentures are a tooth-replacement system that has certainly been around for a long time. Your great-grandparents may well have worn removable dentures.

The image of false teeth in a glass on the bedside table is a cliché of denture wearing. So are the assortment of cleaners and adhesives used with them, and the often-heard complaints that dentures just don't feel right. Slippage or unpleasant odors may cause embarrassment; the loss of self-confidence that can result from denture wearing, though hard to measure, is a real concern as well. Yet there are other problems that could be of even greater concern — problems that could eventually cause a decline in one's overall health.

It's well known that people who wear dentures often have trouble eating "challenging" foods, like raw fruits and vegetables — which, as fate would have it, are just the foods that are thought to provide the greatest nutritional benefits. According to a recent survey, 50% of denture wearers avoid many foods due to these types of difficulties. However, the nutritional problems of numerous denture wearers seem to go even deeper: 29% said they can eat only soft foods (which are often highly processed, with little nutritional value). Another 17% stated that they actually eat better *without* their dentures.

When teeth are lost, the bone that used to support them begins to melt away. That's because bone tissue requires constant stimulation from the tooth's roots to keep rebuilding itself. When that stimulation is absent, bone in the jaw loses volume consistently over time — but this loss occurs in an area of the body that's out of sight, below the gum tissue. The decrease in bone volume not only tends to make you look prematurely aged by compressing the facial features, it may cause TMJ (temporomandibular joint) problems as well.

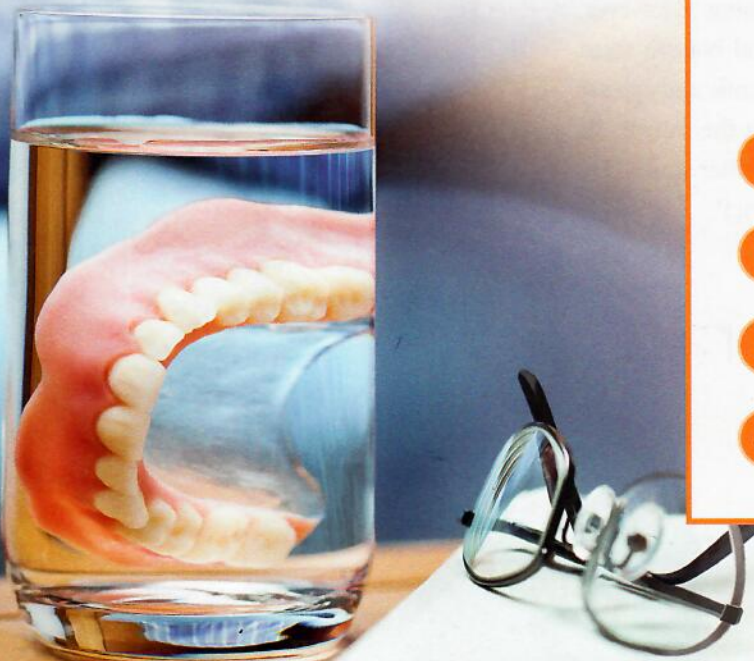
Worse still, wearing removable dentures actually accelerates the process of bone loss. That's because the denture puts pressure on the surface of the bone, rather than distributing it through the entire anatomical structure the way dental implants do. The bone can't handle this type of pressure on its surface, and begins to resorb (melt away) at an increased rate.

If you're wearing dentures or need an answer to the dilemma of missing teeth, ask your dentist whether dental implants may be right for you.

Dangers of Dentures

Progressive Bone Loss in Jaw, Leading to:

- 1 Diminished denture stability over time
- 2 Reduced ability to place dental implants successfully
- 3 Prematurely aged appearance
- 4 Compromised nutrition and chewing ability



The Special Benefits of Dental Implants

No matter how many teeth you need to replace, there are numerous scientific studies demonstrating the ways dental implants surpass other tooth-replacement methods. In general, these fall into two categories: what dental implants do, and what they don't do.

Unlike natural-tooth-supported bridgework, dental implants don't require adjacent healthy teeth to be filed down. Implants don't lead to an increased risk of gum disease, tooth decay, or a root canal problem but research shows these can be issues with bridges supported by filed-down natural teeth. Plus, while studies have shown that those bridges may have a failure rate as high as 10% in just 3 years (and up to 30% in 10 years),* dental implants have been shown in studies to have a long-term success rate of over 95%.

Unlike removable dentures, implants won't shift or feel uncomfortable. They don't develop odors or need special cleaners and adhesives. They don't restrict what foods you can eat or make you feel uncomfortable about chewing, speaking, or smiling. And you'll never have to worry about them slipping or falling out.

One of the biggest benefits of dental implants is that they can help reduce bone loss in the jaw. The natural erosion of bone begins as soon as a tooth is lost — and, if more tooth loss occurs, it may result in the loss of other teeth and lead to a sunken, prematurely aged look in one's facial features. Because dental implants integrate into bone, they provide a stimulus that keeps the jawbone from deteriorating. This helps to maintain a more youthful facial structure — and better oral health.

Another benefit of implants is the lasting value they offer. While there are other options for tooth replacement that may cost less initially, an investment in dental implants provides benefits that truly endure. With proper care, they can last for the rest of your life — and how many other investments can offer that promise? But perhaps the main benefit of dental implants is how they make you feel: like a younger, healthier you.

* Tan, K et al, A Systematic review of the survival and complication rates of fixed partial dentures after an observation period of at least 5 years, Oral Implants Research, 2004:Vol 15, Iss 6, pages 654-666

THE GOLD STANDARD OF TOOTH REPLACEMENT

Dental Implants DO:

- Feel very natural
- Minimize bone loss and appearance of aging
- Have the highest success rate for tooth replacement (over 95%)
- Last a lifetime*
- Resist gum disease
- Restore proper chewing ability

Dental Implants DON'T:

- Slip or move
- Decay
- Need root canal treatment
- Restrict your diet
- Impair your speech
- Typically need replacement

* The first patient that received a dental implant in 1965, died 40 years later with the implant still in place. Close to the Edge - Brånemark and the Development of Osseointegration, edited by Elaine McClarence, Quintessence 2003.

Replacing All Teeth with Dental Implants

How TeethXpress can give you new teeth — fast!

For years, you may have suffered with the well-known problems of missing teeth: embarrassment in social situations, difficulties with speaking and eating your favorite foods, declining confidence and lowered self-esteem. Whether or not you know it, you may be suffering from the less visible issues of tooth loss as well — namely bone loss, and the gradual (but very real) effects it may cause.

Now, perhaps you are deciding whether it's finally time to turn all that around with dental implants. You've heard all of the benefits this state-of-the-art tooth replacement system offers — and you've been told you can have new teeth in a one-day procedure. But you may be wondering: Can these promises really be true?

In a word: Yes! TeethXpress, which features unique technologies by BioHorizons, allows people to receive teeth as fast as possible and with greater confidence of success. With TeethXpress, dental professionals are helping countless people change their lives each and every day. In most cases, you'll come into the dental office for your procedure and leave with your new teeth on the same day. Surprised? There's no need to be; this is simply the culmination of decades of research in dental implant technology and continuous improvements in clinical practice. Let's take a closer look at how it works.

“Now I smile really big, and I never used to do that. It was life-changing.”

Actual
TeethXpress
Patient

Connie

A combination of genetics, lack of dental care and years of smoking created the perfect storm for tooth loss. Dental implants gave Connie back her smile — and her confidence.



How Dental Implants Work

The core principle that makes implants possible involves a unique property of the metallic element titanium. Bone actually attaches to titanium. That allows each small, screw-like implant to function in a similar manner as the root of a natural tooth — solidly supporting a natural-looking crown (visible part of the tooth) above it, and providing vital stimulation to the surrounding bone.

If you have 12 missing teeth, does that mean you need 12 implants? The answer is no. An entire arch (top or bottom set) of teeth can be replaced with just four to six

strategically placed dental implants. If you're wondering how that can work, just think of a highway bridge. The engineers who designed it didn't need to put a support column under every inch of the road — they just needed enough supports to carry the weight of the bridge and the vehicles. Similarly, inside your mouth, your teeth are subject to stresses from chewing and other natural functions. A full arch of teeth can easily get enough support to handle those loads from four to six implants, placed in the right spots.

Engineers don't need to put a support column under every inch of road on a highway bridge — they only use enough supports to carry the weight of the bridge and vehicles. Similarly, teeth are subject to stresses from chewing and other functions. A full arch of teeth can easily get enough support to handle those loads from four to six implants placed in the right spots.



Not all dental implants are made the same; the high-quality dental implants used for TeethXpress have a number of design advantages that make this approach very predictable. With TeethXpress, implants are placed in the bone of your jaw using minimally invasive procedures. The immediate stability of BioHorizons implants means shorter implants can sometimes be used. This is a good thing because with longer implants, it becomes more difficult to avoid the sinus cavities in the upper jaw or nerves in the lower jaw.

Implant surgery is appropriate for most people, and in many cases it can be accomplished in just a few hours. Best of all, if you need to have the last of your failing teeth removed and you're a candidate for implants, your chances are very good that you'll never go a day without teeth because of TeethXpress.

What to Expect When You're Getting New Teeth

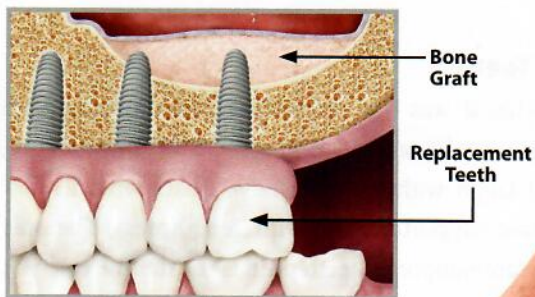
You may be surprised at how easy the process of getting dental implants is with TeethXpress. When you want to find out more about the procedure, it's time to schedule a consultation. Before any work is done, you will be given a thorough dental examination, have some diagnostic images taken, and provide a complete medical history.

One reason for this is to ensure that you are a good candidate for implants. But don't worry — there are only a few medical conditions that preclude implants; other common problems, like bone loss in the jaw or gum disease, can be treated as part of the implant process. The examination also reveals what shape your mouth is in, and what kind of work needs to be done to bring it back to a fully functioning and esthetically pleasing condition.

A COMMON PROBLEM

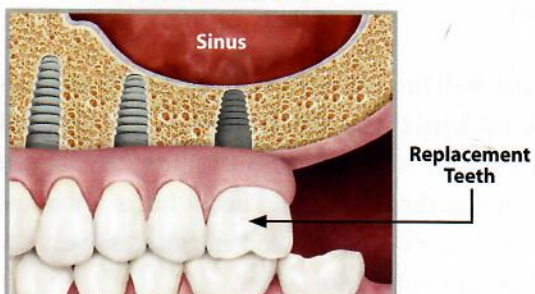
An upper jaw with missing teeth and a prominent sinus cavity

Old Solution

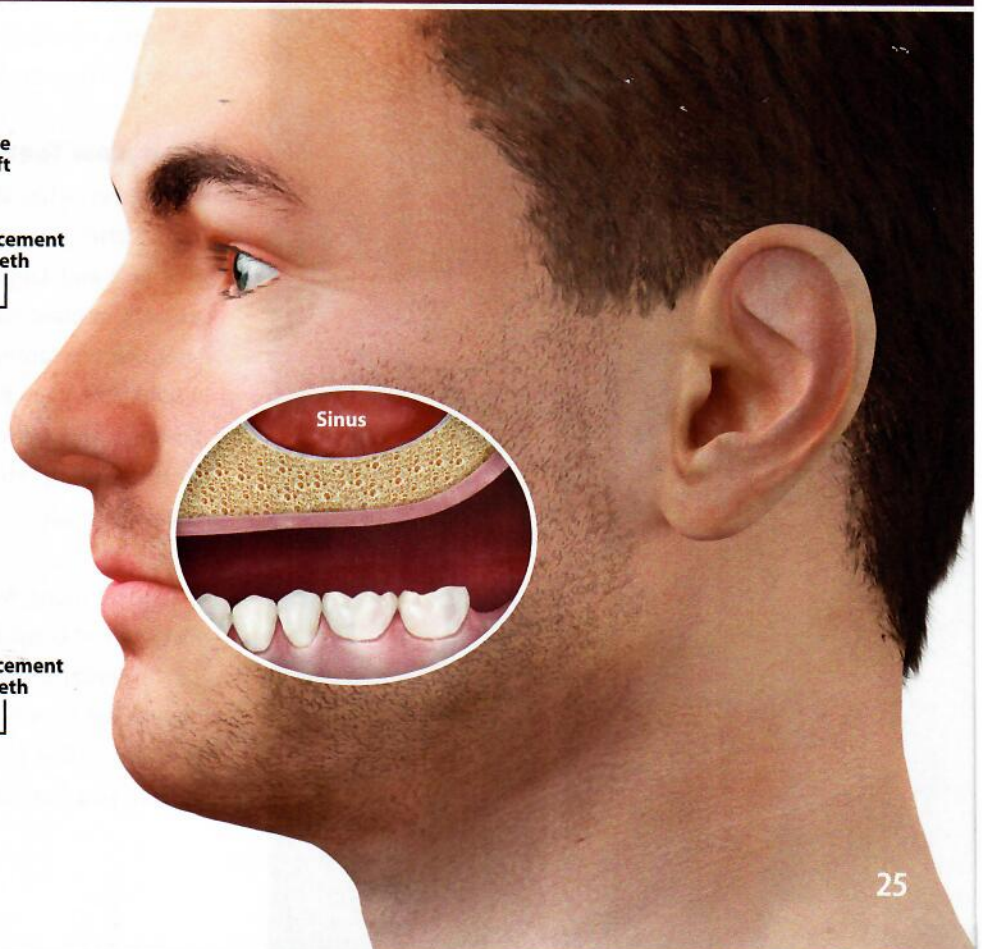


A prominent sinus cavity often requires sinus surgery to increase the amount of bone for traditional implants.

New Solution



With TeethXpress technology, sinus surgery can be avoided with the use of shorter implants.



The Implant Procedure

Typically, a local anesthetic is all that's needed to remain comfortable during the procedure; the sensations you'll experience are comparable to having cavities filled. First, your dentist will remove any teeth that are hopeless. Then, the appropriate number of implants (usually 4-6) will be placed in your jaw, in locations that provide optimal strength and stability. Finally, a complete set of temporary replacement teeth, custom-fabricated in advance especially for you, will be attached to the implants. You'll rest comfortably in the office for a while — and once you look in the mirror, you will see a dramatic change in your appearance.

What Happens Next

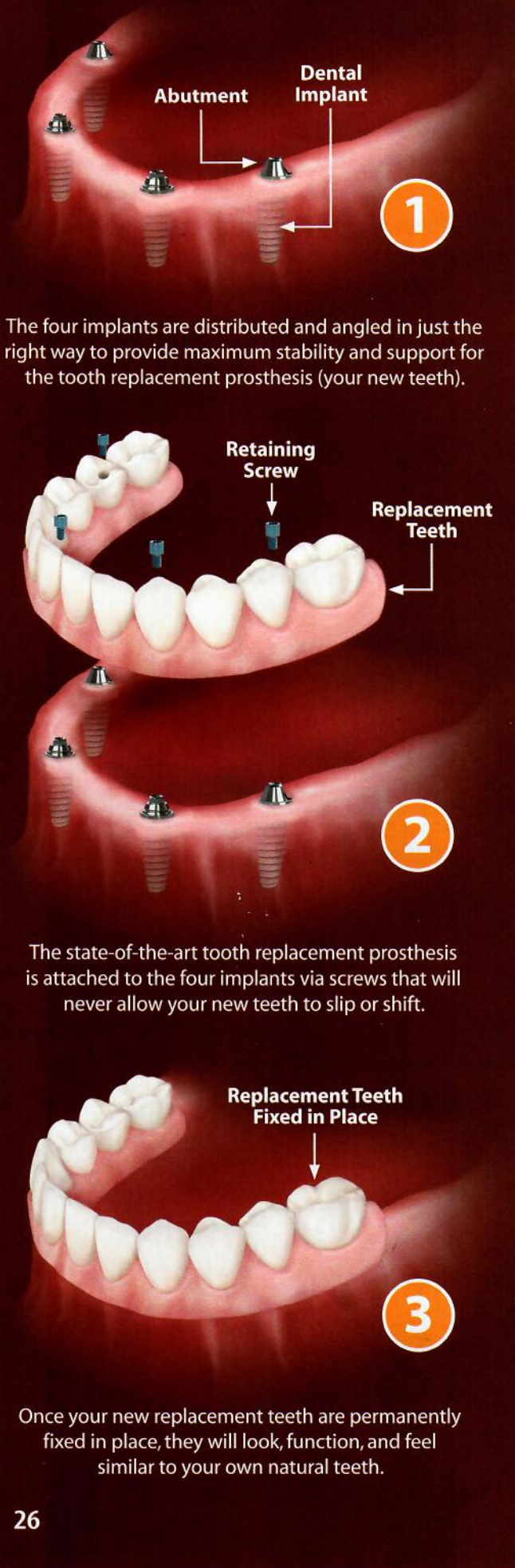
It's normal to feel some soreness for a day or two, but any discomfort can generally be controlled by an over-the-counter pain reliever such as ibuprofen. You can usually return to normal activities within a day or so, but you'll be advised by your dentist to eat a softer diet for a few weeks.

Over the next few months, as the implants become fully integrated into the bone, you'll return to the dental office periodically for monitoring. When healing is nearly complete, an impression (mold) will be taken of your mouth, and a new set of prosthetic teeth will be expertly crafted. Then, they will be firmly attached to the implants, and those new permanent teeth will become your own.

Your New Teeth

Remember what it was like before you had problems with your teeth? You could eat what you wanted with confidence, and talk and laugh without uneasiness. That's what it's like to have implant-supported teeth with TeethXpress. The only attention implant-supported teeth need is the routine care you would give your natural teeth: namely, regular brushing and flossing, and periodic dental examinations and professional cleanings. Properly cared for, dental implants can last for the rest of your life.

If you are living with the problems of missing teeth, perhaps it's time you considered the benefits of implants. Getting a full set of dental implants is an investment in yourself that can have a big payoff in the long term. Plus, it offers some real benefits — like greater confidence and enhanced self-esteem — that you just can't put a price tag on.



1

The four implants are distributed and angled in just the right way to provide maximum stability and support for the tooth replacement prosthesis (your new teeth).

2

The state-of-the-art tooth replacement prosthesis is attached to the four implants via screws that will never allow your new teeth to slip or shift.

3

Once your new replacement teeth are permanently fixed in place, they will look, function, and feel similar to your own natural teeth.

Peggy

A New Smile After Years of Pain

At age 72, Peggy is all smiles, but this wasn't always the case. Looking at old pictures of herself, she noted that she was always hiding her teeth. "I was very embarrassed by my mouth," she recalled.

Severe health problems and several medications had taken a toll on her dental health. Unfortunately, with so many other health concerns, she neglected dental care for over a decade. "I hadn't been to a dentist, and my teeth were just falling out and rotting."

Peggy had constant dental pain and couldn't chew properly, so her food choices were very limited. Finally, she decided to put an end to the problem: Her remaining teeth were removed and she received a full set of implant-supported replacement teeth on both top and bottom. "Now I can't even imagine life before my new teeth. I can eat everything I want. There are absolutely no limitations," she said. "And it doesn't feel artificial. I forget that I have implants."

**"Now I can't even
imagine life before
my new teeth."**

As an added bonus, now that Peggy has secure teeth, healthy gums and a much more nutritious diet, her overall health has improved. "My bloodwork is the best I've ever had."

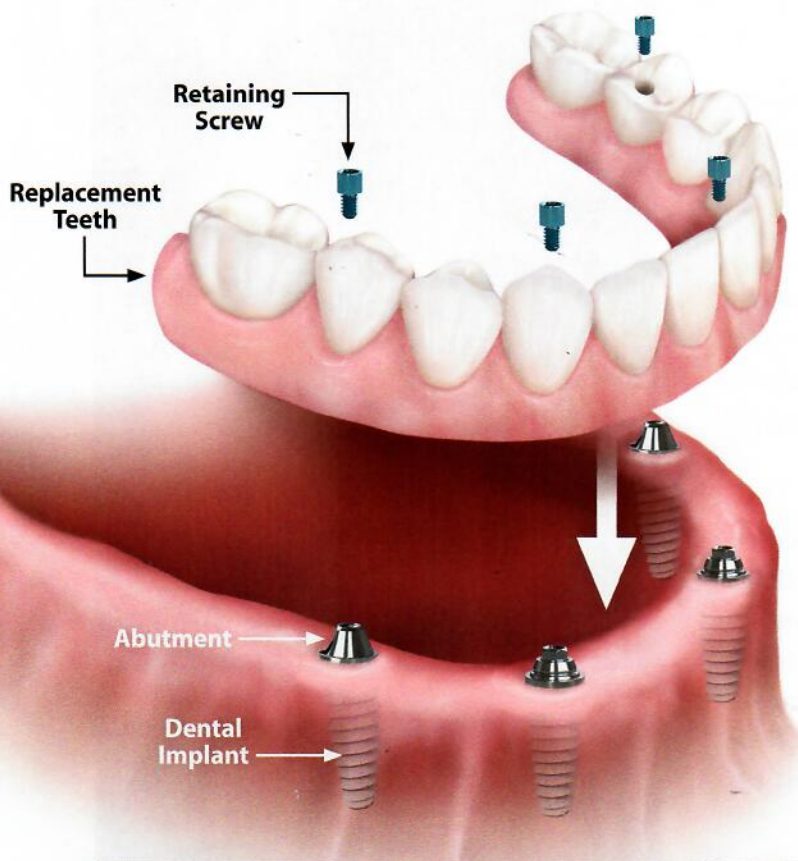
"So now it's full-on smiles. I love it!" Peggy gushed. "When they say dental implants give you your smile back, there's no doubt in my mind implants did that for me."

Actual TeethXpress Patient



Implant-Supported Teeth

State-of-the-Art Tooth Replacement



Replacement teeth supported by dental implants are the closest thing to natural teeth. In fact, people who have dental implants often say they don't even think of them as tooth replacements — they think of them as their own teeth. That's because implant-supported teeth look, feel and function like natural teeth. The implants themselves act as a substitute for natural tooth roots, anchoring a full arch of life-like prosthetic teeth in the bone beneath the gums. Implants are made of biocompatible titanium, which is uniquely able to fuse to living bone. This provides strong, stable points of attachment for the new teeth. Once the implants have integrated with the bone, no foods are off-limits. What's more, implants help preserve bone quantity and quality, ensuring that the replacement teeth will not slip or lose their fit over time as dentures will. It's a system that's designed to last for a lifetime.

Implant-Supported Teeth Facts

Gold standard for tooth replacement

An investment that can last a lifetime

Helps preserve bone quantity and quality, reducing appearance of premature aging

Works and feels like your own natural teeth

Strong and stable — no slippage or need for removal

No need for costly denture creams or adhesives

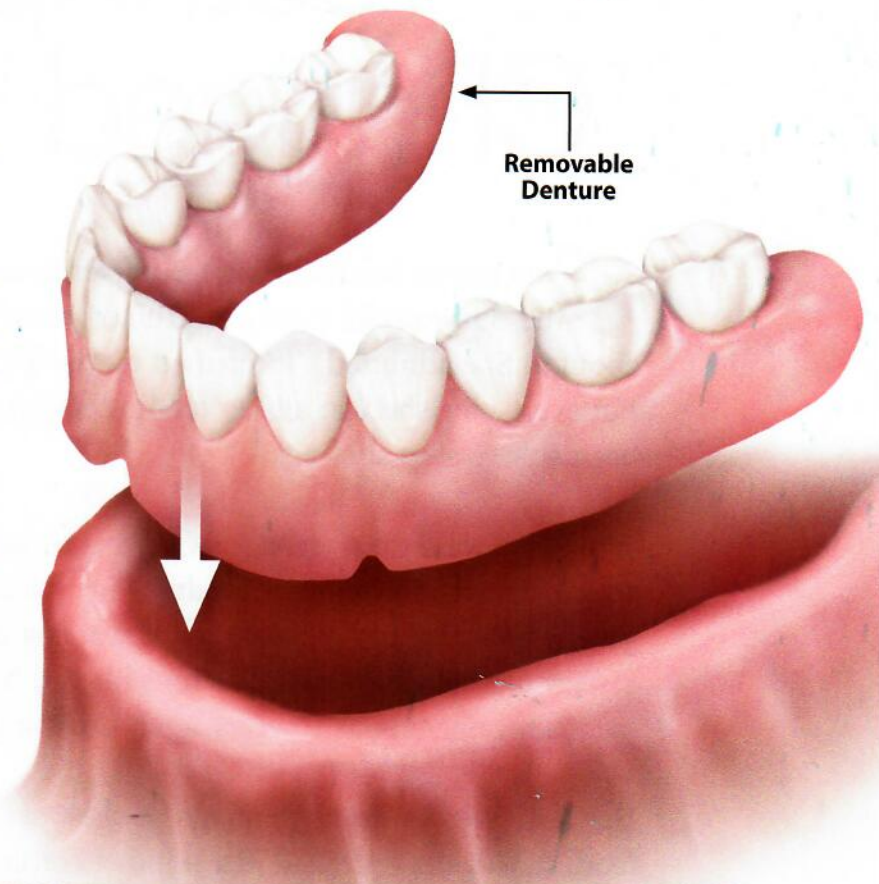
Provides firm support of facial structures (lips and cheeks)

Restores proper chewing ability up to 100%, allowing a better diet and improved health

Removable Dentures

Low-Tech Tooth Replacement

Removable dentures have been in use for centuries. While newer materials have made them look more realistic, certain problems with wearing dentures can't really be eliminated. For example, wearing dentures often accelerates the loss of bone in the jaw that always follows tooth loss. That's because dentures put pressure on the bony ridge beneath the gums on which they sit. The pressure causes the bone to shrink in volume as it is resorbed by the body over time. This causes the dentures to lose their fit. When this happens, the dentures need to be remade or relined. However, even properly fitting dentures can sometimes slip and cause embarrassment. And they won't necessarily allow you to eat all the foods you need to maintain a healthy balanced diet — particularly raw fruits and vegetables. The very fact that they are removable means they will never truly feel like natural teeth.



Removable Denture Facts

Old technology — the last resort

Lower cost initially, but requires continued maintenance costs through lifetime

Decreases bone quantity and quality, resulting in appearance of premature aging

Doesn't feel and function like your own natural teeth

Unstable and unreliable

Denture adhesives and creams often needed

Support of facial structures will likely decrease over time

Chewing ability is commonly reduced to 5-15% over long-term use, leaving limited food choices

TeethXpress: The BioHorizons Advantage

An exciting, state-of-the-art way to get new teeth — fast!

If you've had a chance to look through this magazine, one remarkable figure may already have caught your eye — the 95% success rate of dental implants. In general, this makes them the most reliable way to replace your missing teeth over the long term. But the documented success rates for specific implants can be higher or lower. For implants made by BioHorizons, it's closer to 99%.* That's why your implant provider has chosen them over all the others on the market. The foundation of this impressive record is built on a unique technology only available from dentists using BioHorizons. Let's take a closer look at what makes it work so well.

Two major conditions have to be met to ensure that implants are capable of supporting fully functional and great-looking replacement teeth: The implants must form a solid connection to the bone that surrounds them; and they must remain free of infection. BioHorizons implants have unique features that have proven effective in both of these areas.

You might have noticed that most dental implants are shaped like small screws. Yet even implants that may look the same have important distinctions. For example, implants made by BioHorizons have a uniquely engineered shape and thread design that allows them to achieve stability from the moment they are inserted.

“The biggest change is in my confidence. I used to not like to smile. Now I smile as much as I can.”

Jamonica

Actual TeethXpress Patient

Implant thread design allows BioHorizons implants to achieve immediate stability.



This enhanced stability makes it possible for you to get new teeth as fast as possible — the cornerstone of the TeethXpress approach. In many cases, you can even receive new temporary teeth the same day your implants are placed, without compromising the high success rate. Of course, your BioHorizons implant dentist will do whatever is best for your own unique situation, even if that means taking some extra time to ensure that your underlying bone is in good shape and your implant sites heal as expected. TeethXpress is not a one-size-fits-all approach with arbitrary timetables. It is a reliable treatment process your dentist can use in whatever way best meets your tooth-replacement needs.

“Having dental implants made me feel better about myself. And I look better when I smile.”

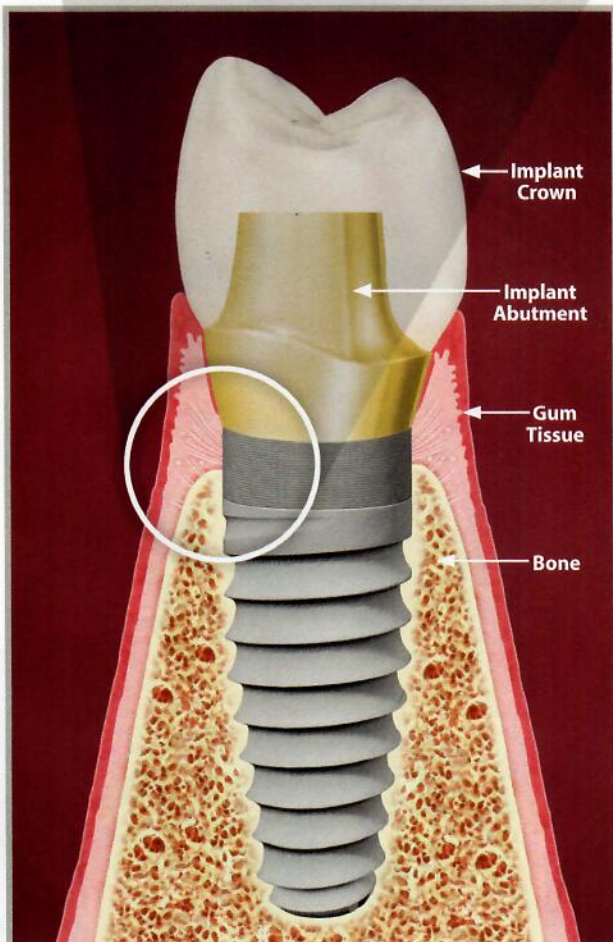
Carly

Actual TeethXpress Patient





Laser-Lok technology aids not only the attachment of bone cells but also the attachment of gum tissue to the implant. This helps seal out food debris and bacteria to prevent infection.



In addition to the unique thread design, only BioHorizons implants have Laser-Lok® technology. A truly remarkable innovation, Laser-Lok is a series of cell-sized microchannels that are precisely laser-machined onto the implant surface. What makes that so special and important?

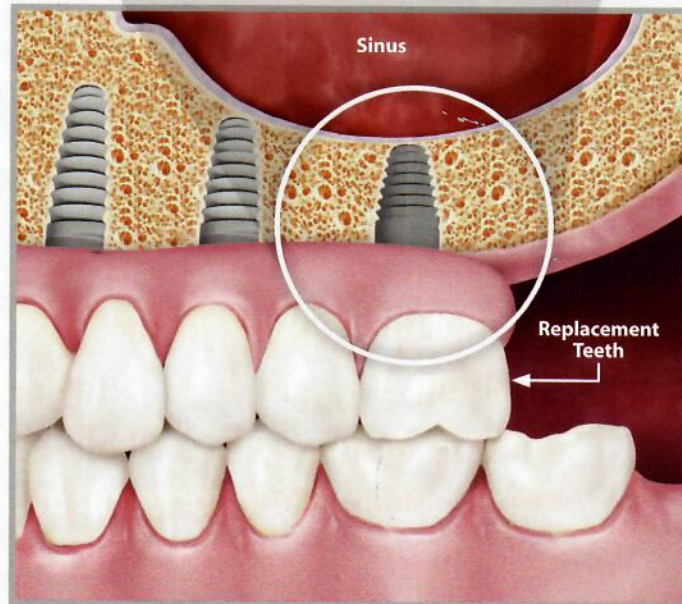
- While virtually all implants on the market have a roughened surface to promote attachment of bone cells, only Laser-Lok channels are optimally sized to attach both bone cells and gum cells. This is another feature that enhances stability — but it does something else, too: it seals out food particles and other debris that could get below the gum line and cause infection. BioHorizons implants have a strong attachment of the gum tissue while other implant systems have only a light adhesion, which is not a true attachment.**

Other implant systems have grit-blasted and/or acid-etched surface treatments. These surface treatments are fine for bone attachment but not effective for soft-tissue attachment. This could allow food and debris below the gum surface. Should an infection develop under these circumstances, the implant may lose its attachment to the bone, or fail to attach altogether.

With Laser-Lok channels running the entire length of the implant, a shorter implant can be used, where in the past a longer implant would be necessary. This can be an advantage in potentially avoiding the need for sinus surgery.



Also, BioHorizons makes shorter implants that have Laser-Lok channels running the entire length of the implant. The enhanced stability this creates allows shorter implants to be used in situations where this would be helpful to avoid sinus cavities (and potentially the need for sinus-augmentation surgery) or nerves. Finally, Laser-Lok is thought to be more effective than other implant designs in reducing bone loss in the jaw — a common effect of tooth loss (see “Health Hazards of Tooth Loss,” page 48).



Laser-Lok technology allows shorter implants to be used, potentially avoiding the need for sinus surgery.

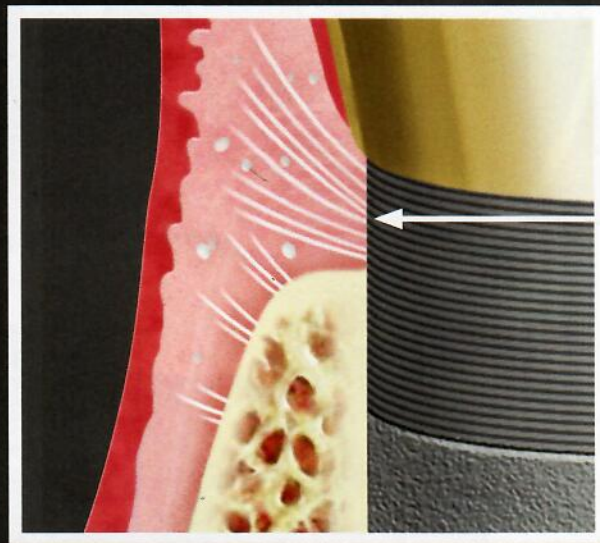
See next page for a side-by-side comparison of BioHorizons technology vs. other implant technology

For more than 20 years, BioHorizons has been committed to providing the most comprehensive line of clinically tested, scientifically proven dental implants available. The company has been a consistent innovator in biomedical engineering, and today it is the proud holder of 24 unique patent awards. Numerous research studies have demonstrated the unparalleled success of BioHorizons implants. That's why every one of them carries a lifetime warranty.

* Implant success rate is the weighted average of all published studies on BioHorizons implants. These studies are available for doctor review in BioHorizons document numbers ML0606 and ML0130.

** Human Histologic Evidence of a Connective Tissue Attachment to a Dental Implant. M Nevins, ML Nevins, M Camelo, JL Boyesen, DM Kim. International Journal of Periodontics & Restorative Dentistry. Vol. 28, No. 2, 2008.

BioHorizons



Strong Attachment

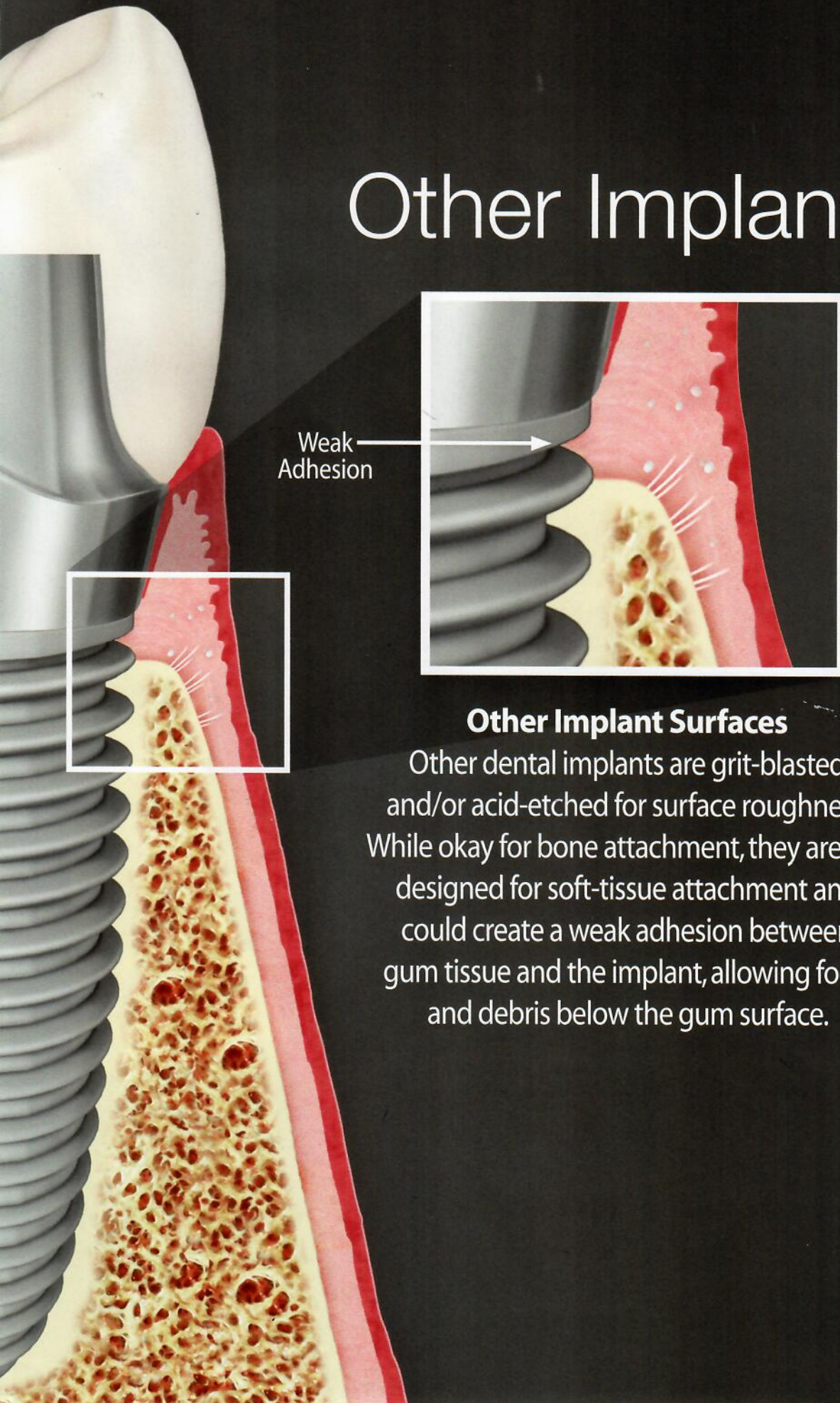
Laser-Lok Technology

Laser-Lok is a series of precision-engineered cell-sized channels laser-machined onto the surface of the implant and its connecting piece, the abutment. This unique surface treatment ensures a strong attachment between the implant and your bone and gum tissue, helping to seal out food particles and debris.

Thread Design

BioHorizons thread design creates a more stable implant for immediate tooth replacement.

Other Implants



Other Implant Surfaces

Other dental implants are grit-blasted and/or acid-etched for surface roughness. While okay for bone attachment, they are not designed for soft-tissue attachment and could create a weak adhesion between gum tissue and the implant, allowing food and debris below the gum surface.

How TeethXpress Changed My Life

Cara knows firsthand what a difference a smile makes. For an entire decade, the 35-year-old Pilates instructor wasn't able to smile without worrying about it. She admitted, "It terrified me for a long time just to look at my teeth." But ever since she had all her teeth replaced with dental implants, Cara hasn't been able to stop smiling.

While she was still a teenager, Cara began suffering from rampant tooth decay, which she attributes to her fondness for sweet, acidic beverages combined with genetics. Both of her parents started wearing dentures before age 40. Cara had a history of root canals and numerous fillings, but she stopped having dental treatment altogether about 10 years ago. "And things absolutely got worse," Cara said.

Her teeth weren't healthy enough to chew solid food, so she was restricted to a soft diet consisting mostly of bananas, mashed potatoes, baked sweet potatoes and over-steamed vegetables. She wasn't able to eat a steak for 10 years. "I really had no teeth," she said.

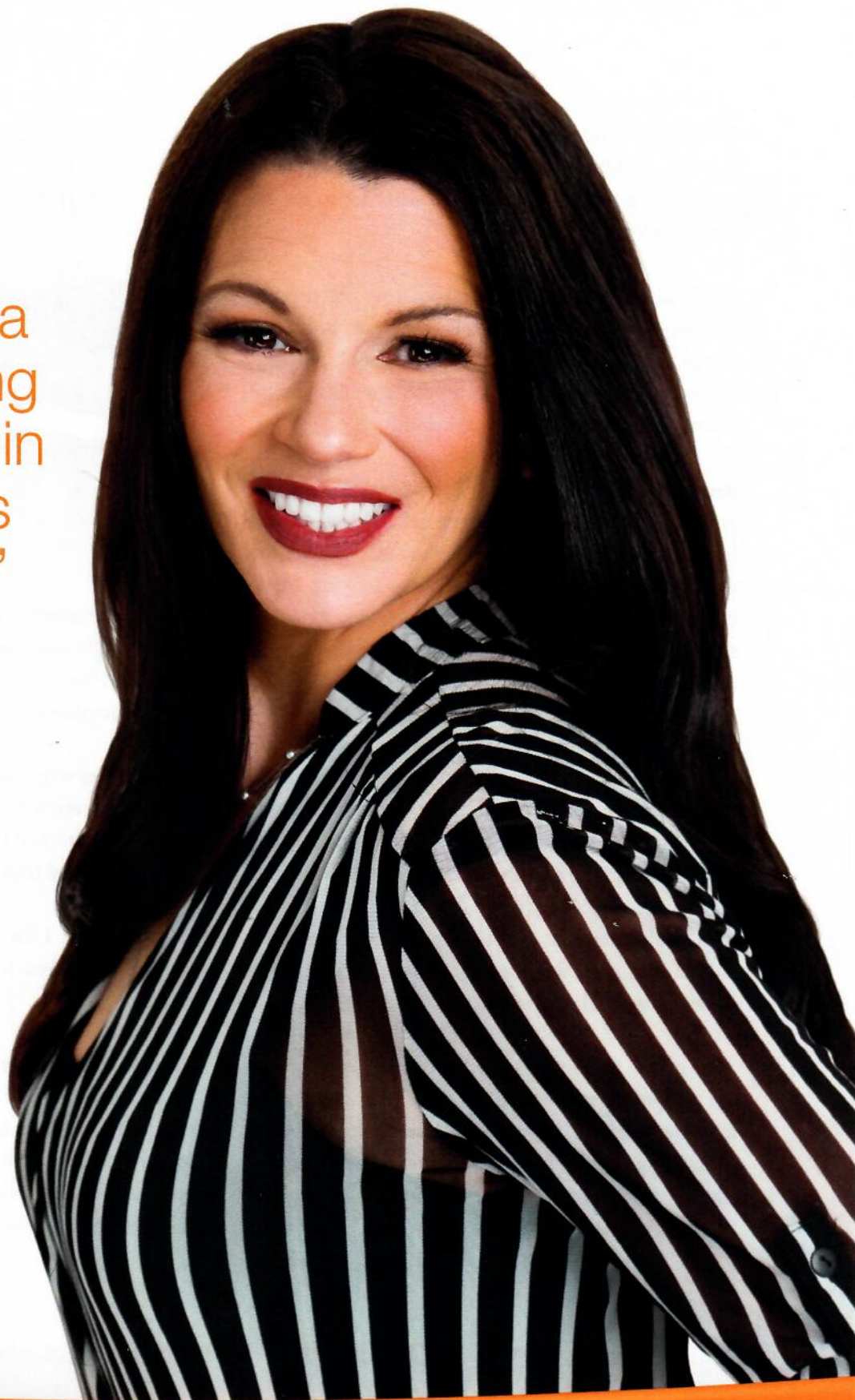


Her life was marred by trouble with digestion, debilitating sinus headaches and near-daily fibromyalgia flares. Her career was affected as well. "I'm a Pilates instructor. It's health-based, and the healthier you look, the further you go."

“This is
absolutely a
life-changing
experience in
all aspects
of my life.”

Cara

Actual TeethXpress Patient



She had aspirations of studying to become a psychologist but couldn't imagine people feeling comfortable enough in a face-to-face situation with her to tell her their problems.

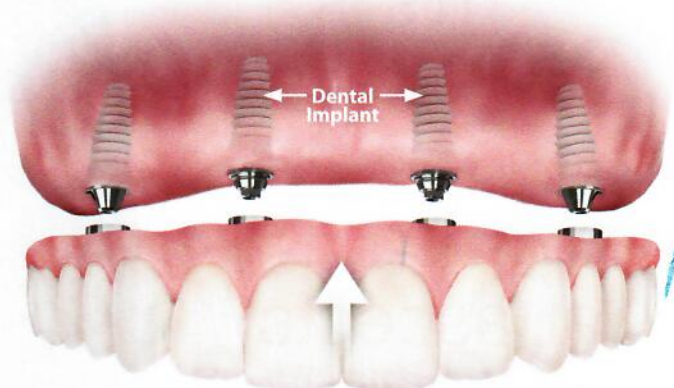
As Cara's dental condition worsened over the years, so did her self-esteem. She became a hermit. Before her dental implant treatment, she said, "I don't go out. I don't date. I don't go on social media. I'm embarrassed. I don't want anybody to see me like this."

Removable dentures were not a good option since they restrict the types of food you can eat and lead to bone loss over time. When teeth are missing, the bone that used to support them diminishes year by year. Dental implants, in contrast, stimulate the jawbone to keep it strong, so they are the optimal long-term solution for missing teeth.

On the day of surgery, Cara showed up early for her 7 a.m. appointment because she couldn't wait for her new smile. She was given a sedative, and her remaining natural teeth were gently removed. Four dental implants were placed in the top jaw and five were placed in the bottom jaw. Cara's doctor said, "Restoring them this way with TeethXpress was the closest we could come to her natural teeth, and the best way that we could improve her bite, her aesthetics and her functionality."

After only a few hours, Cara left the dental office with her temporary set of teeth, so there was never a time after the implants were placed when Cara had to be seen without teeth. "Immediately after the surgery, I was smiling and laughing. It was a huge weight lifted off not just my chest but my life!"

Replacing All Teeth with TeethXpress



The transformation happened immediately. Cara looked younger right away, since supporting the facial structure with teeth keeps a youthful appearance. And healing after the implant procedure was easy, according to Cara.

Cara had her temporary teeth for several months as the implants integrated with the bone. After the healing period, she returned for her final teeth. At this stage, her smile was honed to perfection.

"Shock is what I felt when I saw my teeth for the first time. They looked so beautiful and natural!" she exclaimed.

Cara says her new teeth are "spot-on" and "amazing." No longer concealing her teeth, Cara is once again enjoying time with family and friends. "Everyone who has seen my teeth has told me how beautiful they are," she said. "And I have been eating everything in the world ... I'm so happy and more healthy now that I can eat whatever I want."

In fact, Cara's health has drastically improved. A connection between dental health and systemic (whole-body) health has long been recognized, and Cara is a living example. Now, she hardly ever has sinus headaches and her fibromyalgia flare-ups have gone from daily to perhaps one a month. "I had an autoimmune condition that is almost completely gone," she said. "I'm so unbelievably thankful that this has had an impact on the rest of my life."

Besides being able to eat normally, Cara looks forward to going back to school and not being embarrassed to raise

her hand to ask questions in class. She is thrilled that she no longer has to worry about what people think of her. Before her treatment, she said, "Everywhere I went when my focus was supposed to be on something else, it was actually on hiding my teeth."

"This is absolutely a life-changing experience in all aspects of my life," Cara said. She summed up how she feels now that she has her new smile: "Extremely fortunate and blessed and excited about the future!"



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