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Dr. Mardirossian

Dental Implant or Dental Bridge?

If you've lost a tooth, whether it's from an accident, gum disease, a failed root canal, tooth decay or something else, chances are you're looking to get it replaced. Years ago, the recommended procedure would be to grind the adjacent healthy teeth down to nubs and use them as anchors for a three-tooth bridge. This is aptly called a dental bridge. Luckily, there is a better option available today. A dental implant allows you to keep your healthy teeth and just replace the bad one.

According to the American Academy of Implant Dentistry, about 3 million people receive 5.5 million implants each year in the United States, which is growing by an additional 500,000 more patients each year. Comparable to traditional crowns, the root of a damaged tooth is also capped in a dental implant. The difference, however, is that an artificial root can be implanted to anchor the crown, when not enough of the natural tooth is left to support it.

Dental implants require more time and effort than dental bridges, but the results are more than worth it. A dental bridge is fixed, which means it is a non-removable prosthesis attached to your remaining natural tooth. Unfortunately, the step that requires healthy teeth to be filed down to accept the bridge, makes these teeth prone to bacterial plaque accumulations, decay, periodontal disease, and the possible need for future root canals.

On the other side, dental implants have advanced to produce a product that has much better structural integrity. Although they may seem more expensive than dental bridges, the investment is well worth it. Dental bridges typically need to be replaced every 10-15 years, which can cost you more money in the long run. And there are many advantages to dental implants: improved appearance with teeth that look and feel like your own; improved comfort; easier eating; improved oral health; durability; convenience; and improved self-esteem. Another benefit is that dental implants have a success rate of up to 95%, especially with proper oral care.

If you want to find out more about dental implants, make an appointment with your periodontist, who can answer any questions you may have. W

