

A Bridge or a Dental Implant

Last Updated Sunday, 18 February 2007

Perhaps one of the most frequently asked questions on this site is whether or not to use a fixed ("permanent") bridge or a dental implant to replace one or two missing teeth. Suppose you are missing your lower left first molar. If a fixed bridge were to be used, your dentist would cut down the adjacent teeth (the second molar and the second bicuspid) and fit a three unit fixed bridge over those two teeth. The missing tooth would be called a pontic and it would be effectively replaced by the three unit bridge. If your dentist were to use an implant with a crown on it, he would place an implant in the site of the original first molar. He could do this immediately or at some date after the first molar was removed. There is no time limit here. The implant will take about 3 months to connect with the bone and then at that time, your dentist can construct a single crown on the implant to replace the missing first molar.

The cost of each one of these procedures varies from office to office, but a three unit fixed bridge costs about the same as an implant and a crown. The actual decision to do one over the other rests with you and your dentist. One technique is not inherently better than the other and each depends upon how you present and your dentists skills. All things being equal, I would usually prefer to place the implant and crown over the bridge.