

Mini Dental Implants

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I get a lot of emails asking me the difference between "Mini Dental Implants" and "Regular Dental Implants" so I would like to address the differences. . .

When we refer to a regular dental implant, we are referring to an implant that is approximately 4.0mm in diameter and is placed in a prepared site in the bone. These are the implants that were first introduced in the mid 1980's and they were the first implants to show successful, long-term support for dental restorations. These implants actually come in a variety of shapes and sizes but they all require drilling of a site and placement of the implant into that site. Bone will eventually bond to the surface of the implant and the implant will become a "permanent" fixture in the jaw bone. We have a tremendous amount of research and study on how this process works and verified statistics indicating excellent long-term success.

Mini Implants have a diameter of about 2mm. They are placed in bone as a self tapping entity which means that a site is not prepared. These implants seem to rely on mechanical stability and there are no studies that show any integration with the bone. As a matter of fact, there are no studies at all on these implants since they were merely designed to be used as temporary implants to be removed at a later time. In some instances, mini implants can last a very long time and they are very useful in stabilizing a lower denture, especially in an older patient who might not be suited for surgery.

There are lots of dentists out there saying that mini implants work just as well as regular implants. Most dentists use mini implants the way they were meant to be used, cautiously and in very specific situations. Others use them for everything that regular implants are used for and get into lots of trouble with the failures. The bottom line is that mini implants are best used to stabilize a lower denture in a very economical manner.

If you are over 70 years of age, in poor health and need some stabilization of your lower denture, you might consider mini implants. If not, stick with the real thing. SRD