

When things Go Wrong

Last Updated Wednesday, 20 September 2006

1. What happens if I get an infection?

Infections are rare with dental implants, but they do occur. In most situations, they can be controlled with careful procedures and antibiotics. If you suspect a severe infection, it is often a good idea to consult with a second doctor.

2. What happens if an implant fails?

Implants do fail from up to 10% of the time depending upon a number of factors. The good news is that in most cases, another implant may be placed in it's place and the chances of success are usually very good. This refers to root form implants and not to sub periosteal implants which are not recommended.

3. What happens if a nerve is damaged?

Nerve damage is possible when working in the back portion of the lower jaw. It can result in a permanent paresthesia which feels like the lower jaw is permanently numb. There can also be some pain involving the nerve. Fortunately, nerve damage is rare and can be prevented by careful technique. If you do suffer nerve damage, I would suggest immediate consultation with a qualified Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeon.

4. What happens if the implant ends up in my sinus?

Very rarely, an implant can be pushed completely into the maxillary sinus. If this happens, it should be removed immediately. If your dentist has trouble removing, an oral and maxillofacial surgeon should be consulted as soon as possible. It is not unusual for an implant to protrude slightly into the maxillary sinus and this is not a problem.

5. What happens if the entire implant restoration fails?

Also rare is the complete failure of an entire implant supported restoration. When this happens within a short period of time (less than five years) it should be the responsibility of the dentist or dental team to correct the situation if possible. If you are being treated by a team of dentists, don't let them get you caught up in the argument of who is responsible for the failure of the restoration... As far as you are concerned, they both are...

6. Why am I having this problem?

When you do have a problem, make sure you know what your options are. Your dentist should have a good plan that he or she is willing to discuss with you for correcting the problem. A consultation with another doctor is always a good idea.

7. What can be done to correct the problem?

When something does go wrong, you want your dentist to completely explain why it went wrong and what they are going to do to correct the situation. Sometimes we honestly do not know why some of these things

do not work but usually, we can learn a bit from a failure and make sure that it does not happen again.

8. Should

I consult with anybody else about correcting this problem?

It is always a good idea to get another opinion when you are having a problem. Evaluate what everyone has to say about the problem and participate in the decision to solve it. Sometimes you will get conflicting opinions... that's a constant part of medicine and dentistry and you just have to go with the individual whom you trust the most. I am always willing to examine your dental records and offer my opinion to help further confuse you...

9. Will

the repair or correction be as good as the original proposed treatment?

You want to know if a repair or remake will be as good as what you initially contracted to receive. Sometimes when we have a failure, it is not possible to correct it up to the original intended standards.

10. What

costs will be involved in correcting this situation?

Always know what the fees will be before anyone starts anything. Don't assume that something will be repaired for no additional charge.

11. If

I can't resolve a problem with my dentist, where do I go?

If things go wrong and you cannot get any satisfaction from your dentist, contact the local Dental Society or the State Dental Board. They should be listed in the yellow pages or you can find them on the Net...