

2003 Atlanta Tribune Article by Dr. Dunson

Dental Implants and the Modern Dentist

The goal of the modern dentist is to return patients to oral health in a predictable fashion. The partial and complete denture patient may be unable to recover normal function, cosmetics, comfort, and speech with traditional removable appliances. Approximately 20 million Americans (15%) are completely missing teeth in their top or bottom jawbone. An additional 40 million (30%) are missing one or more teeth. Patients who lose teeth prematurely lose facial form due to bone loss, and will subsequently age prematurely.

There are a plethora of advantages to having dental implants as replacements. First, dental implants serve as substitutes for natural tooth roots. They can be used to replace one tooth, several teeth, or an entire set of teeth. Treatment options include single crowns, fixed bridgework, or an implant retained denture. Like natural teeth, dental implants provide a dramatic increase in the chewing force as compared to conventional removable prosthetics (partials and dentures). Additional functional and cosmetic advantages include, but are not limited to, an increase in stability and retention, improved phonetics, increased proprioception, and the maintenance of facial form and features.

Ultimately, dental implants offer a predictable treatment course, and they look, feel, and function much like natural teeth and have similar maintenance requirements.v