

Dental Implant Patient Suitability

There is no longer any doubt about the efficacy or predictability of dental implant treatments and the significant benefits they can bring to patients' dental function and personal confidence.

The McGill Consensus (2002) has been adopted by the World Health Organisation, and recognises that the implant supported overdenture is the ideal minimum standard of care for edentulous patients.

GENERAL HEALTH

There are few absolute contraindications to implant therapy. If an extraction is viable then usually implant surgery is feasible. Exceptions would be immunocompromised patients and those undergoing active chemo or radiotherapy. For patients taking oral bisphosphate the current advice is to inform you that there is an increased risk of developing osteonecrosis over and above that of the general population.

DENTAL HEALTH

Ideally oral disease should be controlled, with a stable periodontal condition, a controlled caries risk and adequate occlusal support. But, the very nature of implant therapy, means that the patients facing tooth loss through disease or trauma are by definition the ones considering their options for tooth replacement, whether to re-establish good function, restore aesthetics, or both.

IMPLANT SITE

Generally speaking it is advisable to leave a failing tooth in situ and refer for a consultation prior to extraction, so the patient can make an informed treatment decision before tooth loss. For the edentulous patient or where teeth have been lost for some time, judgement about suitability should be ideally be made at the implant consultation. There are now many techniques available to help the patient with reduced bone volume and advances in bone augmentation. If in doubt refer for a free consultation!

As clinicians, we are obligated by professional guidelines to give our patients un biased information about the full range of treatment options for a given clinical situation, irrespective of our own personal skill set and any subjective judgements about affordability.