

Ask The Dentists

Dear Dr.s Winter: Can you make my dentures non-removable?

Details: I had my few remaining teeth removed and torus surgery done in Dec of 2008 and full dentures (upper and lower) put in immediately. It went well. My dentist explained that after a year of complete healing I would probably require a relining at a cost of \$1000. I would like to explore my other options. I am tired of using adhesives 2-3 times a day. I am a 58 yr old healthy active woman. thanks

Answer: Dear Danielle, you sound like an excellent candidate for "fixed teeth." When a denture needs relining it is because the gum tissues have healed and shrunken after the initial extractions. The rubbing of the denture against this tissue leads to bone loss as well. People lose bone at an alarming rate and over the first 5 years there can be a loss of 60% of the original bone height and/or width. If you come in for a comprehensive examination and x-ray visit we can discuss your options, the associated costs and the time involved to help you reach your goals.

Options for fixed dentistry on implants will be either a "hybrid" prosthesis-a fixed denture that is cemented or screwed into the implants or a fixed porcelain bridge on implants. In order for you to get these prostheses you would need 6-9 implants in the upper arch and 5-9 implants in the lower jaw. The number of implants depends on the quality, quantity and location of your existing bone as well as your budget.

I often explain to patients that if you go with a prosthesis where only 4 implants are placed and 1 fails, you have a complete failure of the bridge. So using more supports will improve the engineering of the prosthesis and decrease the forces on each individual implant.

If the implants are found to be too expensive for the number required, then sometimes fewer



Drs. Richard and Bruce Winter

implants can be placed with an interim snap-on-denture, until more implants can be afforded. Then the prosthesis can be changed from a removable to a fixed bridge. So the concept of "Upgradeable Dentistry" allows our patients to sequentially upgrade their dental options based upon their financial, emotional and personal readiness. You can read Dr. Richard Winter's articles on Upgradeable Dentistry at WWW.WINTERDENTAL.COM under publications to see more examples of these implant options as well as videos.

Please call our office at 414-464-9021 to schedule your visit. I look forward to meeting you.

Sincerely, Dr. Rick

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