

Hypodontia

Hypodontia is a term that means that you were born without some teeth. About 3-5% of the population are born without one or more teeth. We do not know exactly what causes people to be missing teeth although it is thought that it is likely to be associated with your genes in most cases.

What does that mean for me?

If you are born without one or more teeth there are always options to help. Which option will be best for you depends on a range of factors from which teeth are missing to how you bite together to individual concerns and choice. The most common options are listed below:

- Leave baby teeth in place.
- Replace the gap with a false tooth.
- Use a brace to close down the space.
- Use a brace to open the space up for a false tooth.

What are the options for false teeth?

Whenever there is a gap to be filled there are a number of options. Which is best for you will depend on a range of factors but the main options are listed below:

- Do nothing and leave a space. This is usually only used if the space is towards the back of the mouth.
- A denture. These are removable teeth and suit some patients. They are usually best used for patients with lots of teeth missing or as an interim option prior to a more fixed alternative.



Figure 1: A partial denture to replace 5 missing teeth

- A bridge. This is a false tooth that fills a space and is glued to an adjacent tooth. This is usually a good option when only one or 2 teeth are missing.



Figure 2: An example of a patient that has bridges in the lateral incisor regions on both sides. The bridges are glued onto the canines and fill the space left by missing lateral incisors.

- An implant. This is a screw that is placed in the jaw bone and a false tooth placed on top of it. This option is more complex and involves minor surgery. This option is only used for select cases.

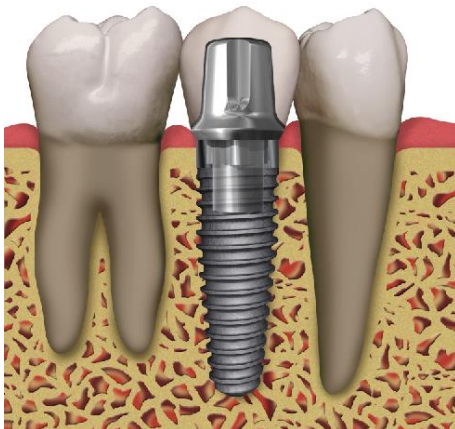


Figure 3: A picture to show the titanium screw that forms the base of the implant with a false crown on top of it between 2 healthy teeth.

How do we know what is the best option for me?

When we see you in the department we will take lots of clinical records. We will then use these photographs, X-rays and models to find as many options as possible that may suit your needs. We will then discuss these options with you at a clinic that has both an orthodontist and a restorative consultant (a dentist that specialises in replacing missing teeth). Following this discussion a treatment plan will be made and then treatment can start as is required.