



This article is written and presented by Dr. Boris Pulec MDS

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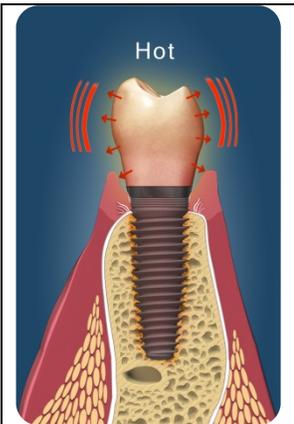
Taking care of your dental Implants (By Dr. B. Pulec)

Congratulations on your completion of dental implant treatment. These instructions are for patients that have dental implants placed and restored that are non-removable single or multiple tooth replacement.

Eat any foods but with caution

Dental implants are very strong and you can eat everyday foods as long as you do not do anything extreme such as open packages with your teeth or cracking bones. You have spent a lot of money on your dental implants so take care of them.

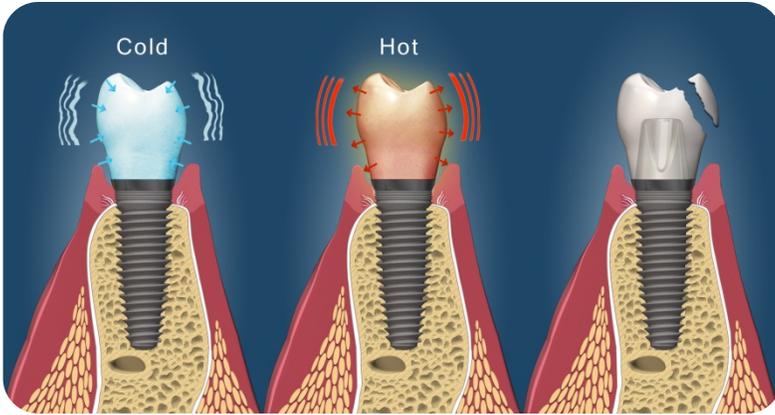
Do not drink very hot liquids



Dental implants are made of metal and metal retains heat more readily than soft human tissue. If you drink very hot liquids the implant tooth may heat up from the liquid and stay hot enough and long enough to burn a thin layer of cells around the implant. With repeated small damages this may cause the loss of the implant. The rule is if you cannot touch it-- like a hot coffee --don't drink it !!

Do not drink or eat hot and cold liquids or food together .

The Crown on your dental implant is covered with porcelain. It like glass expands with heat and contracts with cold. So if you drink something very cold and then drink something very hot the porcelain may crack and you will have a chip break from your crown. This is the same for any porcelain crowns not just ones on dental implants. Your teeth also may have the same results. Although enamel (teeth) act slightly different they too can crack or get micro fractures and then become sensitive. So if you just had ice cream wait a few minutes before you have that hot soup or you may find a part of your tooth in your soup.

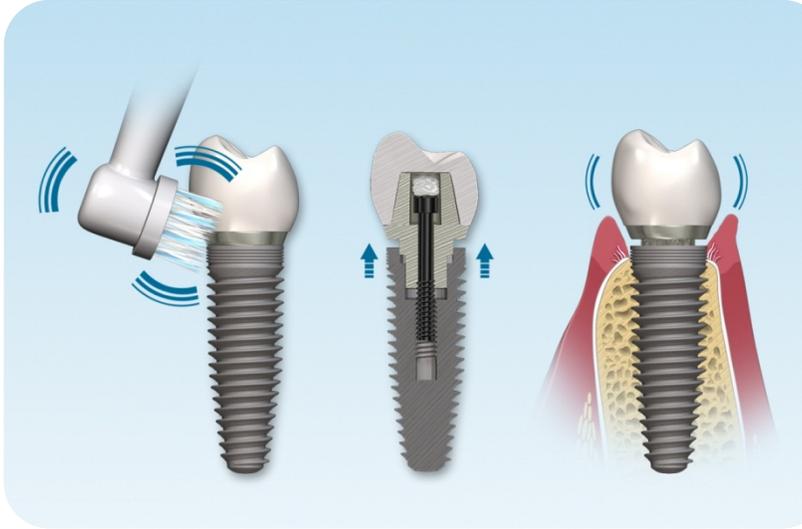


When a vibrating toothbrush is used it creates vibrations that loosen the internal screw. It only has to loosen a bit for the crown to become "LOOSE". Now this is a very difficult situation. We cannot tighten the crew because the crown is cemented on top of the post which covers the screw. We also cannot loosen the screw further because the screw cannot loosen any more without turning the entire tooth. It is very difficult to separate all the parts in order to tighten the screw and many times the crown will need to be replaced at a significant cost.

Do not use vibrating electric tooth brushes .

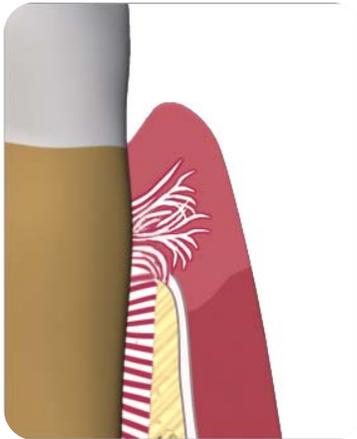
First you need to understand the parts of the implant tooth complex. There is the crown (1) this is what you see in your mouth and think of when you think of the tooth .Then there is the internal screw (2) This is a tiny screw that screws through the post (3) and into the implant (4) .So the post goes into the implant the crew goes on the post and secures the post to the implant . Now the crown has something to attach to. It is cemented (glued) to the post, Take a look at the diagram below.



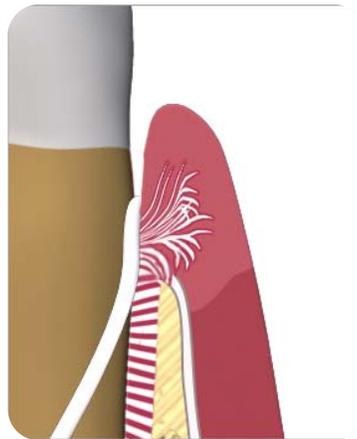


First you need to understand that dental implants are not teeth. Gums attach to teeth with a very strong ligament that also has nerves. This is called the periodontal Ligament. So when you floss teeth it is good to push the floss into the pocket. The ligament will stop you from damaging the area and the nerves will create pain to stop you from damage.

Do not floss around the implant .

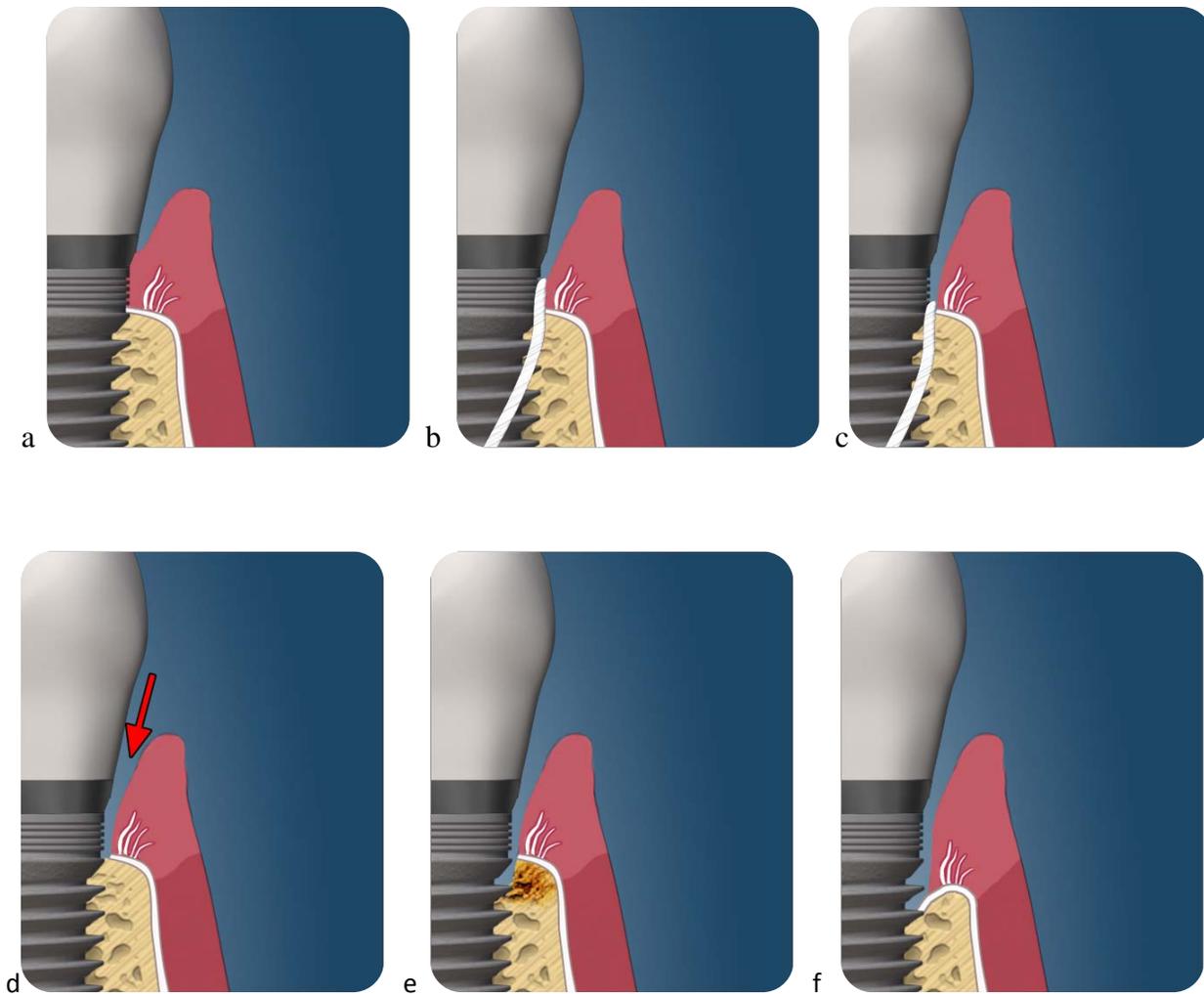


Gingival complex with natral dention



Floss in gingival pocket of natural dentition

Implants however do not have a periodontal ligament attached to the implant. They have what is called a Peri-implant seal. This seal is weak and not well supplied with nerves. So it is easily broken and does not hurt when you do break it. Aggressive flossing will cut this seal allowing bacteria to enter the pocket and access the bone. This in turn will cause bone damage around implants and can lead to the loss of the implant.



- a) Shows the gum attached to the implant (peri implant seal).
- b) Shows cautious flossing without damage.
- c) Shows flossing to vigorously and cutting the seal.
- d) Now there is an opening for bacteria to access the bone. e) Bacteria will cause bone damage.
- e) there will be bone loss around the implant leading to other problems which may include loss of the implant.

If you feel that you can floss around the implants without going into the pocketing more than 1-2 mm (like in figure b) then go ahead but if you do not think you have the patience or manual dexterity to do so it is better you do not floss at all than to cause damage.

The same concept should be remembered when using other instruments to clean around dental implants such as a proxy or Sulka brush. These little brushes are great around teeth. But if there is not much room between the implants or other teeth than the delicate attachment can once again be damaged with vigorous use of the proxy brush or Sulka brush.

A great way to clean around implants is to use Water pick .R. This is a water spray that cleans the teeth like a touch less car wash . But keep in mind again too much pressure may cause damage to the pocket so keep it at the lowest level .There is a portable unit available <http://www.waterpik.com/> that is less forceful that may be better.

Let your Hygienist or whomever is cleaning your teeth know you have dental implants.

The hygienist or dentist that is cleaning your teeth must be aware of which teeth are dental implants. Dental implant supported crown or just dental implants look exactly like regular teeth with crowns. If the dental professional cleaning your teeth does not look at the x- rays they will not know that they are dental implants. Most will but sometimes in a busy schedule they might just start cleaning as they do regular teeth. Implant teeth should be cleaned with different types of instruments as not to scratch the surface (they are more easily scratched) . They should again not be cleaned with ultrasonic /vibrating instruments of any kind (even if the manufacturer says that it is ok). Furthermore the hygienist or dentist must take special care not to clean too vigorously as not to damage the weal attachment between the gums and the implant.

Keep Regular Dental Maintenance Appointments .

It is critical to check the implants at least 1 per year by someone that knows dental implants in addition to your 6 month or 4 month cleaning schedule. At this appointment the bone levels will be evaluated as well as many other things such as soft tissue heal and occlusion. Like many things in dentistry and medicine if the problem is found early it can usually be corrected without more serious consequences that result in not addressing the problem early.

Notes :

This article has been brought to you by Dr. Boris Pulec of www.dentalimplantlife.com

If you have any questions or comments, please email me at drpulec@consult-pro.com