

## **WHAT TO EXPECT**

A crown supported by an implant is the closest thing to a natural tooth available in dentistry.

### STRENGTH

Unlike denture teeth, it can withstand forces equal to and greater than natural teeth can so once it is restored, you can eat pretty much what you were able to eat with your natural teeth.

Dentures supported by implants, are also just as strong as your natural teeth. This is because unlike traditional dentures that only relies on your gums for support, implants are anchored into your jaw bone to withstand greater amount of force without shifting or sliding. Unlike the jaw bone without teeth or implants, bone volume tends to be maintained if it has teeth or implants to support.

### SENSATION

There are limitation – because there are no sensory nerves around an implant like there are around natural roots of a tooth, you can bite onto hard things without “feeling” how hard they are. Since our chewing muscles are very strong, it is possible with repeated exposure to hard chewing, the underlying implant fixture can fracture or resorb the bone supporting the implant. But typically the overlaying implant-supported crown or denture will break before the implant does.

### LONGEVITY

Much like any human-made prosthesis, the crown that is placed on top of an implant is subject to natural wear and tear over time. Depending on a number of individual factors, some may wear them faster than others. Not many things out there last for a life time and same applies to your implant supported prosthesis. Depending on the material, some last longer than others.

Implant supported dentures are often made with resin or plastic material and with the ability for the implants to withstand stronger forces, the denture may wear faster than if they were supported by your gums which limits the chewing force to about 1/6 (or less) of that of natural teeth and implants.

### MAINTENANCE

If you have a screw-retained implant crown (preferred type for single tooth replacement for most back teeth), it may loosen over time from forces applies from normal use. When this happens, simply call the office to get it re-tightened. One can go years without needing to do this with normal use. Some clenchers/grinders may loosen it faster from heavier and more frequent forces applied to it. This varies from individual. Just don't wait until the crown falls off before calling your dentist. You can usually tell when it starts to get loose.

### HOME CARE

It is true that implants cannot get cavities. HOWEVER, it isn't uncommon for patients to develop gum disease (aka. Periodontal disease). Periodontal disease is a disease of the supporting tissue that supports the teeth and/or implants. When perio disease occurs around an implant, it is called “Peri-implantitis”. Practicing good oral hygiene through brushing at least twice a day and flossing after each meal will reduce your risk of developing periodontal disease that can compromise the implant-supporting tissue. Bacteria can settle between your gums and the implant and eventually make their way down the jaw between the implant and bone, just as they can with natural teeth, which can lead to the eventual loss of your chewing apparatus – whether they are implants or teeth.

Regular professional dental cleaning is recommended with implants as it is for natural teeth. The goal is to keep the area clean to reduce bone loss around the implant.