The aim of this leaflet is to give you information about dental implants, pre- and post-operative care and the expected time that treatment will take.

General Information

What is a dental implant?
- A small metal device that is placed in the jaw bone to replace a missing tooth root.

What are dental implants used for?
- Once healed, they are used as a base for retaining or anchoring individual crowns, multi-tooth bridges or dentures. Radiographic and clinical findings will be used to make the decision whether the final restoration is fixed rigidly to the implant or is removable.

What are the priority patient groups that may receive dental implants within the NHS?
- Guidelines from the Royal College of Surgeons state that the following groups are a priority:
  - Patients with severe denture intolerance
  - Patients with disorders of tooth development (missing teeth from birth)
- Patients that have suffered tooth loss following trauma to their mouth
- Patients with acquired or developmental hard/soft tissue loss, for example, replacement of teeth following surgery for mouth cancer.

**If I fall into one of these groups, is there anything that would stop me getting dental implants within the NHS?**

- Smoking
- Poor cleaning
- Active oral disease, for example, dental decay, gum disease, fillings needing replacement

**Procedure to insert dental implants**

**Pre-op Care**
- During the day before your surgery please rinse 4 times with chlorhexidine mouthwash
- Rinse thoroughly with chlorhexidine on the morning of the operation
- Have a good meal before the operation

**Procedure**
- The procedure to insert a dental implant is usually completed with you awake using local anaesthetic to numb the area.
- In the cases where the patient is anxious this can be carried out with intravenous sedation.
- It involves lifting the gum, drilling holes in the jaw bone and insertion of a dental implant that is smaller than your tooth root.
- Sometimes a small bone graft using materials from a bovine (cow) or porcine (pig) source is needed. This will be discussed further with you.
- In some cases a larger amount of bone is required. This bone graft is placed 3 – 4 months before the implant and is taken from another site in the lower jaw or, in some cases; from the hip (this requires a general anaesthetic).
- Sutures (stitches) will be used and will remain in place for 1 – 2 weeks.
Post-op Care

- Avoid strenuous activity for the remainder of the day.
- Smoking and alcohol consumption delay wound healing and should be avoided for 3 days following surgery.
- Do not raise or lift your lip or cheeks to look at the surgical site as you may dislodge the sutures (stitches).
- You may be given antibiotics to reduce the chance of infection.
- Gently rinse with chlorhexidine 4 times a day until your review appointment. Do not use a tooth brush around the surgical site but continue to brush the remainder of your teeth/ clean your dentures.
- You should expect to have discomfort, bruising and swelling after the operation.
  - For this reason you should have Ibuprofen tablets at home. Do not exceed the maximum dosage. Paracetamol may be taken as an alternative if you cannot take Ibuprofen or you have taken the maximum dosage of Ibuprofen.
- You may not be able to wear your denture for 1 – 2 weeks after the procedure.
- The sutures (stitches) that have been placed need to be removed to ensure proper healing.
- Recall appointments will be arranged to monitor healing.
- If any complications arise, do not hesitate to call Dundee Dental Hospital. The number is on the front of this leaflet.

Timescale

- If damaged teeth need to be removed, this will usually be completed 6 – 8 weeks before the dental implant is inserted into your jaw bone.
- Once inserted, your body needs to heal around the dental implant and this takes between 2 and 6 months. In a small number of cases, the implant does not properly fuse to your bone and this would mean that the implant would have to be removed.
- After healing is complete, impressions need to be taken of your mouth before the crown; bridge or denture can be attached to the implant. This can take 2 – 3 months.
Maintenance Care

- You must remain registered with your General Dental Practitioner as they will be asked to monitor your implants in the future.
- It is essential that you clean adequately around your implants to prevent complications that may lead to loss of the implant.
- Occasionally it may be necessary to modify or re-make the crowns, multi-tooth bridges or dentures that are supported by dental implants.

Alternative treatments

- All possible alternative treatments to replace your lost or damaged teeth will be discussed with you. They may include accepting the space, providing a bridge or providing a denture.
- If your concern is related to a loose denture, all possible treatment options will be discussed with you. This may include accepting the current denture or remaking the denture.