

# HOW TO REPLACE MISSING TEETH?

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### Patient Information: Empower You To Make Informed Decision

#### INTRODUCTION

Human has two set of teeth commonly known as milk teeth and permanent teeth. At around 6 to 12 years old, the milk teeth will be gradually replaced by permanent teeth. If the permanent teeth fall off, no teeth will grow again and a gap between teeth will be present.

#### WHY RESTORE THE MISSING TOOTH?



When teeth are missing, it affects not only the appearance but also the way the rest of your teeth bite together. The remaining teeth may tilt or drift into the gaps. Foods can easily get trapped into these gaps, increasing the risk of having tooth decay and gum disease. In addition, the opposing tooth may overgrow, causing a bite relationship problem. Moreover, the supporting bone of the missing teeth may experience a greater bone loss. This increases the difficulty to achieve an ideal result for the denture and bridge restoration.

#### TYPES OF RESTORATION

There are two types of restorations: A) Removable restoration  
 B) Fixed/ Non-removable restoration

#### A) REMOVABLE

1) Denture  
 There are different types of denture base: plastic, soft plastic or metal base. No matter which type of base is used, the teeth will be made out of plastic or porcelain.



i) Plastic base - Easy to construct, the price is cheaper, but it is more fragile than metal base.  
 Cost >RM250 for the first tooth and RM900 (14 teeth on one jaw).



ii) Metal base- The material used is non-corroded metal. It provides an added strength for narrow-based denture and the denture shape is dimensionally stable. This denture exerts less irritation to the tongue. This type of denture is especially suitable for cases where the front teeth of the lower jaw are natural while the back teeth of the lower jaw are artificial. The price for metal base denture is higher.  
 Cost>RM600

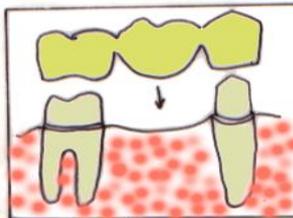


iii) Soft Plastic base – This type of denture can be twisted. Hence, it can be inserted into the concave area of the natural teeth for retention and no metal hook is needed. This type of denture is suitable for cases where the teeth of the lower jaw are not even.  
 Cost>RM600

For a totally toothless patient, they may require a denture with up to fourteen teeth per jaw. Depending on the condition of the bone and teeth, removable denture may be loose and unstable. This may result in difficulty in chewing food. Over time, the bone that supports the denture will undergo resorption. When the bone resorption is severe, a new denture should be made.

#### B) FIXED/ NON-REMOVABLE

##### 1) BRIDGE



It is commonly known as "planting tooth". The teeth beside the missing teeth area will be grinded into smaller size. The grinded teeth will be used as a support for the bridge. The bridge is made out of ceramic (with or without metal base). Bridge is fixed on the adjacent teeth. The patient cannot remove it.  
 Cost: RM880-RM1500 per unit tooth depending on the material used.

**Advantages:** more rigid, do not need to take out, feels more comfortable when chewing food.

**Disadvantages:** Need to grind the adjacent natural teeth. If one of the supporting teeth becomes loose, it will affect the other natural tooth.

##### BRIDGE MATERIALS:

1. Full metal: yellow/white yellowish (precious metal) or gray (non-precious metal).
2. Metal base covered/fused with tooth colored ceramic.
3. High strength porcelain only (non-metal)-Alumina or Zirconia base.
4. Special plastic.

2) **IMPLANT**— If you cannot get used to denture, then you may want to consider an implant. Implant is especially suitable for patients that do not want to grind down their healthy teeth (or in situation where the natural tooth structure is too weak to be grinded).

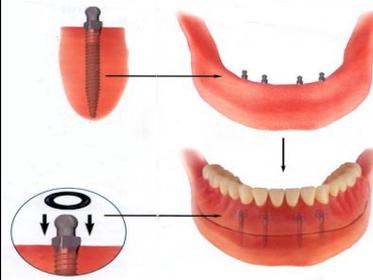


Implant need a minor surgery to place one or more titanium screw into the jaw bone. After 3-6 months, the titanium screw will fuse to the bone and become firm. The screw will be considered as a "root" in the jaw bone, and on top of this "root", a crown, bridge or denture can be made.  
 Cost: RM2700 (root only)-6500 (root, neck, crown, bone graft)

**Advantages:** Rigid, durable.

**Disadvantages:** Traditional implant requires minor oral surgery. The time spent may be around "One tooth per hour" when the implant, neck and crown are placed on the same day. However, for most patients, it may take at least 3-6 months to complete the treatment.

##### MINI-IMPLANT



Mini-implant is more suitable to hold the lower full denture that is loose. Compare to the traditional implant, this procedure is simpler and it usually does not require minor oral surgery. It can be done in one hour and hence, it is cheaper. However, mini-implant is not as stable as the traditional implant.  
 Cost : > RM1000-1200 per implant.  
 2- 4 implants are needed in each jaw.

Other way to close the gaps or replacing missing teeth:

**Orthodontic treatment:** Close the gap by slowly pulling the adjacent teeth close together.

**Advantages:** Orthodontic treatment can make space for the crowded/jam teeth area. The whole process does not involve any artificial tooth. The result is natural because it is merely adjusting the position of your natural tooth.

**Disadvantages:** Takes longer time (6-12 months); cost higher (RM1000-5700).

##### CONCLUSION

The function of the artificial tooth is not as good as your natural tooth. So please take good care of your own teeth. This can be done by attending a regular dental check-up (a check up around every 6 months). Regular checkup will help to keep your gums and teeth healthy as well as detecting any early problems such as gum disease and cavities. Dental checkup involves scaling and filling. Sometimes, the tooth does not necessary need to be extracted even when the tooth is painful.\*All cost of treatments is just an estimate. If you have any enquiry, please consult your dentist.