



CLEANING YOUR DENTAL IMPLANTS

Congratulations on your new dental implants! Proper care and maintenance are crucial to ensure their longevity and your oral health. In addition to regular visits to your dentist and hygienist, it's important to maintain a good oral hygiene routine at home. This guide will walk you through the steps for cleaning your dental implants effectively.

1. **Tools:**

- Soft-bristle toothbrush: Choose a brush specifically designed for dental implants or one with extra-soft bristles to be kind to your gums.
- Low-abrasive toothpaste: Look for toothpaste that is non-abrasive, as abrasive toothpaste can damage the surface of the implant restoration.
- Dental floss or interdental brushes: These tools will help clean the spaces between your implants and natural teeth.
- Antimicrobial mouthwash: An alcohol-free mouthwash can be used to help to reduce bacteria and plaque buildup.

2. **Brushing technique:**

- Hold your toothbrush at a 45-degree angle with the bristles angled toward the gumline and gently brush the gumline around each implant and tooth using small, circular motions.
- Clean all sides of the implant, including the cheek-side, tongue-side, and chewing surfaces.
- Be thorough, but gentle to avoid irritating the gums or surrounding tissues.
- Spend at least two minutes brushing your teeth and implants twice a day, in the morning, and before bed.

3. **Flossing, Waterpik, interdental brushes:**

- There can be small gaps between teeth and implants where bacteria and food particles can accumulate because implant crowns are bulkier and “flare” more at the base. Flossing or using interdental brushes can help remove debris from these spaces.
- A Waterpik can be used but **only on the lowest setting** to irrigate out any large particles. Flossing with string floss is still best.
- Gently insert the dental floss or interdental brush into the spaces between your teeth and implants. Hug the implant crown on either side of the contact to clean the sides of the implants.

4. **Regular professional maintenance:**

- Even with diligent home care, it is crucial to visit your dentist and hygienist regularly for professional maintenance.
- Schedule regular check-ups and cleanings every six months or as recommended by your dental professional.
- During these visits, your dental team will thoroughly clean your implants, check their stability, and evaluate your oral health.

6. **Occlusal guard:**

- An occlusal guard, also known as a nightguard or bite splint, is a removable oral appliance that is custom-made by your dentist to protect your teeth and dental implants.
- Teeth grinding or clenching, known as bruxism, can exert excessive force on your teeth and implants, leading to potential damage and implant failure.
- Your dentist may recommend an occlusal guard if you have a history of bruxism or if they notice signs of teeth grinding during your dental visits. The occlusal guard acts as a cushion, absorbing the forces generated by grinding or clenching, and prevents direct contact between your teeth and implant.
- By wearing an occlusal guard, you can help preserve the integrity of your dental implant and natural teeth, reducing the risk of complications.
- Typically, an occlusal guard is worn at night while you sleep or during times of stress when grinding or clenching is more likely.

Remember, the key to successful dental implant maintenance is consistency. By following these steps and combining them with regular professional care, you can ensure the longevity and health of your dental implants. If you have any questions or concerns, don't hesitate to reach out to our office, we are your best resource for personalized advice and guidance regarding dental implant care.

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