

YOU NEED TO HAVE A TOOTH REMOVED

Unfortunately, you need to have a tooth extracted. This may be due to the unsuitability of the tooth for root filling and/or crowning; the tooth may have a fracture through its root; it may have lost too much bone round its roots (gum disease). Some teeth are not essential- wisdom teeth or back teeth that have no opponent in the opposite jaw. However, just because a tooth is not seen doesn't make it unimportant. When a tooth is removed the bone that was round the root is removed by your body over the next six months. The adjacent teeth and opposing one can tilt into the space created by the tooth's removal.

IMPLANTS

This is an ideal way to replace a tooth that must be extracted. It's also the most expensive way at around £2000 for an individual implant (the metal cylinder embedded in the jaw), and the crown which is connected to the implant later. Implants can act as support for dentures (clip in and out false teeth), or bridges (fixed in non removable).

IF YOU PLAN TO HAVE AN IMPLANT, YOU MUST PLAN TO HAVE IT FITTED AT THE TIME OF THE NATURAL TOOTH BEING EXTRACTED OR WITHIN NINE WEEKS. If not done this quickly the bone, as mentioned above, would be removed from the area by your body. Once gone, it can only be replaced by having bone grafted to the site from another part of your body, or by using artificial bone substitute material. This adds to the difficulty and cost of the case. Normally, a denture will need to be worn until the embedded implant fuses to the jaw bone over a period of 3 months, ready for attachment of the false crown.

DENTURES

Dentures are take in/ take out devices with one or more teeth on them. They can be made in advance and fitted immediately after an extraction, especially if it is a front tooth to be extracted. A denture provided at the time of extraction will not fit well after a few months due to the shrinkage of jaw in that area; Dentures made of acrylic are the simplest and cheapest. Dentures made of acrylic and metal frames are stronger. They also are less bulky, and have clips on them to help grip the denture on to any remaining natural teeth. The latter type of denture has to be made six months after any extractions to allow jaw shrinkage to finish. Some of the anchor teeth for a metal/plastic denture may need to be strengthened using crowns so they are reliable foundations to build the denture round. Plastic only dentures cost from £90 up to £300. Metal/plastic dentures cost from £300 up to £600.

BRIDGES

A bridge is normally made of porcelain bonded over precious metal. The false tooth sits on the gum giving the illusion of emerging from the jaw like a proper tooth. The false tooth is fixed in permanently using either one or more crowns over adjacent natural teeth, or using metal wings wrapped round the back of the adjacent teeth and glued in. A denture is frequently used as the temporary device until the jaw ridge has finished shrinking where the tooth was removed from. Occasionally, a temporary bridge can be

supplied. A bridge is usually priced at £200 per missing tooth and each natural tooth used for anchorage.