CHOOSING THE RIGHT SURGEON FOR DENTAL IMPLANTS

CAN A GENERAL DENTIST PERFORM AN IMPLANT PROCEDURE?

The law allows general dentists to perform implants, but many choose to refer patients to a more experienced specialist, such as a board-certified Periodontist or Oral Surgeon. You should speak with your general dentist before scheduling the surgery to gather information on their level of training and how often they perform the surgery. Finding an experienced specialist, with appropriate credentials and training, provides you with the best chance for long-term successful implant placement.

It is important with any surgery to do your research and ask your dentist any questions or clarifications you need prior to scheduling the appointment for surgery. Ask your dentist to explain fully the dental implant process step by step so you can be sure you fully understand what to expect. This thorough vetting prevents any surprises or unexpected problems from emerging after your dental implant surgery.

WHAT IS THE IMPORTANCE OF SPECIALIZATION?

A periodontist has undergone three years of additional training beyond dental school to become an expert in the treatment of gum disease and the innovative tooth replacement options. Additionally, most tooth loss in adults is due to gum disease. Visiting this type of specialist for your tooth replacement will ensure that the dental implants are placed with precision, superior expertise, and reduced failure rates.

A general dentist spends their days performing a variety of general dentistry treatments, while occasionally providing dental implant services; a board-certified periodontist is a true specialist in this type of procedure. A board-certified periodontist is well-versed in the technical aspects of placement, which makes a significant difference, especially in more complex cases of tooth replacement. Additionally, surgical techniques and technology are likely to be more advanced in specialists' offices, including techniques and advancements that allow for earlier, or immediate, placement of teeth on implants. A specialist's fees are typically higher than a non-specialist/General Dentist because of their advanced training, evidence-based technology, and superior outcomes.

When you are considering dental implants, it is critical, as with any surgical procedure, to make an informed healthcare decision.

WHAT IS THE IMPORTANCE OF BOARD-CERTIFICATION?

Board-certified periodontists are conveyed the title of Diplomates of the American Academy of Periodontology (AAP). They have been approved for Diplomate status by a panel of internationally respected peers for demonstrating a passion for continued professional development, self-evaluation, critical review of therapy results, and providing the best, most up-to-date care. AAP board-certification requires:

- 3+ years of periodontal training following completion of dental school at an American Dental Association/Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) accredited program.

- Additional education, training and evaluation from the American Board of Periodontology, an affiliate of the American Academy of Periodontology.

As a courtesy to our patients, we provided a list of questions below to ask the doctor you are considering for placement of dental implants.

Credentials Questions

1. Are you a general dentist or a specialist?
2. If a general dentist, which specialists do you recommend who perform this procedure?
3. If a specialist, are you board-certified in your specialty (e.g., Diplomate of American Academy of Periodontology)?

TRAINING QUESTIONS

1. Was your implant-specific training performed in a residency program at an accredited academic institution?
2. Where did you complete your training in implants?
3. How many implants did you place in training?
4. What was the length of your implant training?
5. How many implants do you place weekly/monthly/annually? Specialists typically perform 10+ per week, 40+ per month, 500+ per year.

PROCEDURE SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

1. What type/brand of implants do you use?
2. What is your rationale for using this brand?
3. What are the risks associated with the procedure?
4. Do you perform sinus lifts? If yes, how many? If not, what happens in the event I need a sinus lift?
5. What is the proposed treatment plan? What alternative treatment options are available, and what are the pros and cons of each?
6. Do you have case studies to prior procedures you can share with me?
7. What type of warranty/guarantee do you provide for this procedure?

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. If you were having an implant placed, which specialist would perform your surgery? Why?
2. What are the risks associated with the procedure?
3. What percentage of your implants are placed and loaded on the same day?
4. What is the typical complete time of the treatment, from placement to final restoration?
5. Do you use cone beam computed tomography (CBCT) to locate the floor of the sinus, nerves, width of bone, etc. for precision implant placement?
6. What options do you offer for sedation?
7. If I lose my tooth due to gum disease (periodontal disease), can this also happen to my implant?
8. What type of home care and special instructions are required for my implant(s)?
9. What technology do you have available to retain as much bone as possible when removing a tooth for implant placement? I understand there is technology that minimizes trauma upon extraction and maximizes surrounding bone retention.
10. What else should I know about my tooth replacement options?

POST-PROCEDURE QUESTIONS

1. What is the typical follow-up in your office?
2. How many months/years will you continue follow-up?
3. What are the details of your warranty?
4. What are the factors in determining the length of time when I will have the permanent crown placed?
5. What tools or technology do you have in your office to help save failing implants?
6. What tools or technology do your practice and hygienists use to maintain and care for the implants and surrounding tissue?

When you are considering dental implants, it is critical, as with any surgical procedure, to make an informed healthcare decision.

Why Choose AZPerio for dental implants?

Most adult tooth loss is related to gum disease (references below). A periodontist is well-trained and has the technology to interrupt this underdiagnosed disease state resulting in missing teeth, mobile teeth and bone loss, and contributing to serious systemic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and dementia.

Patients are often not aware of the prevalence of gum disease. In the United States, 42% of adults age 30 and older have gum disease. Age is an important risk factor; the prevalence of gum disease in patients 65 and older is 60%.

A board-certified periodontist is best-positioned to treat the true cause of the tooth loss and provide you with the optimal treatment plan to minimize the costs of additional tooth and bone loss.

1. https://www.nidcr.nih.gov/research/data-statistics/periodontal-disease.
2. https://www.cdc.gov/oral-health/about/about-tooth-loss.html
3. https://magazine.medlineplus.gov/article/gum-disease-by-the-numbers