Missing a Tooth: Options to Replace It | Core Dental

Canonical: https://www.coredental.com.au/im-missing-tooth-options-replace/

Details:

If you are missing a tooth, whether it was removed or never developed, the main options a dentist may discuss are a dental implant, a dental bridge, or a removable denture. An implant is an artificial tooth root placed in the jawbone and topped with a crown. A bridge fills the gap using the neighbouring teeth for support. A removable partial denture is another option. At Core Dental, our dentists assess your teeth, gums and bite first, then explain which options may suit you.

What are dental implants and how do they replace a missing tooth?

A dental implant is an artificial tooth root placed into the jawbone to replace one or more missing teeth. An artificial tooth or crown is attached to the implant through a connector called an abutment. Over time the implant fuses with the surrounding bone, much like a natural tooth root does.

Dentists often value implants because they are designed to look and function like natural teeth and do not need to be taken out for cleaning. A single implant can support a porcelain crown, while several implants can support a bridge or a denture. Suitability depends on factors such as your bone volume, gum health and general health, so an examination and imaging are needed first. You can read more about dental implants at Core Dental and the different approaches, including conventional implants .

Can dental implants hold a denture in place?

Yes, in some cases. Attachments or clips can be placed on the implants to hold a denture steady, which is known as an overdenture. This can help a denture feel more secure than a conventional removable denture. Our team can explain whether implant-retained dentures may suit your situation.

What is a dental bridge and how does it work?

A dental bridge replaces a missing tooth, or several missing teeth, by suspending an artificial tooth (called a pontic) from the natural teeth on either side of the gap. Those natural teeth are prepared so they can support the bridge. Because the bridge sits close to the gum, it can blend in with the rest of your smile.

Bridges are fixed in place and do not need to be removed for cleaning, although you will need to clean carefully around and under them. They can be made from materials that match the colour and translucency of natural teeth. Because the supporting teeth are shaped to hold the bridge, your dentist will talk with you about the condition of those teeth before recommending this option. Find out more about dental bridges .

What denture options are available if I am missing teeth?

Depending on how many teeth are missing, your dentist may recommend a removable partial denture. Full dentures are available for people who are missing all of their natural teeth on the top or bottom. In

some circumstances a dentist may provide an immediate denture at the same appointment as a tooth extraction, so that you avoid living with a gap in the meantime.

Dentures can be made from acrylic or metal, and your dentist will discuss which material may suit your circumstances. See our denture options for more information.

Why does my dentist need to look at the cause of the tooth loss first?

Before any replacement can be carried out, problems such as decay, gum disease, tooth grinding and clenching need to be diagnosed. These problems may have been the main reason a tooth was lost, so managing them directly supports the longevity of whatever replacement you choose.

Your case may not be entirely straightforward. Some people need care from a team of dental specialists, such as a prosthodontist, periodontist or orthodontist, so the replacement can work well and look natural. Where this applies, our general dentists can work with our registered specialists as part of your treatment plan. See our dentists and registered specialists .

What should I expect when I get a replacement tooth?

However you replace a missing tooth, it may not look or feel exactly like your original tooth. Getting used to a replacement is an adjustment process, and our dentists will aim to make that transition period as smooth as possible. Regular maintenance and check-ups are then important to keep your replacement tooth or teeth in good repair.

How should I plan my care and prepare for a consultation?

A useful first step is to explain your concern, symptoms, timing and treatment goals when you book. Bring relevant medical information and a current medicines list. Your dentist can then assess your teeth, gums, bite and surrounding tissues, request imaging when clinically appropriate, and explain which options are suitable.

It helps to ask what the recommended approach is intended to achieve, whether there are reasonable alternatives, what preparation and aftercare involve, and what risks or limitations apply. Treatment time, fees, recovery and maintenance vary with the diagnosis and the complexity of care. A written treatment plan can help you compare stages, expected appointments and payment arrangements before you proceed, and we quote before treatment starts.

Call 000 immediately for uncontrollable bleeding, breathing or swallowing difficulty, serious facial injury or other life-threatening symptoms. For severe tooth pain or swelling without these emergency signs, contact us promptly and see our emergency dentistry page.

What is assessed before anything is recommended

A missing tooth is a choice between options, and which options are open depends on things that have to be looked at first. The published advice lists them, and the list explains why nobody can answer the question over the phone.

For an implant. The Victorian Department of Health: "The area of the missing tooth needs to be studied to make sure it is suitable for an implant. This includes looking at the gum and bone health, amount of space, your bite, and your general health."

For a partial denture. "It is important for your remaining teeth and gums to be in good health, to support the partial denture."

For a bridge. The supporting teeth either side are what carries it, and the preparation varies. The Department says the supporting teeth sometimes need little preparation, and that "other times bridges may involve removing a lot of healthy tooth structure on either side of the missing tooth".

And for all of them, the Department's sequencing rule. "The first step is to make sure your teeth and mouth are in good health." Its own list of what to do before cosmetic treatment begins: "Treat any disease first. Your health is the priority."; "Find out what is causing the unsatisfactory appearance of your teeth."; "Talk about the range of treatment options."; "Work out a realistic plan that suits you."

One thing worth checking before you choose: can the tooth still be saved? Where the pulp is affected, root canal treatment means "a tooth can function without its pulp and, in most cases, can be kept indefinitely". And the Department's general position is that "these days, dental practitioners aim to help you keep your natural teeth for as long as possible", with the observation that "no therapy or replacement will last as well as a healthy tooth".

Sources: Better Health Channel (Victorian Department of Health), Cosmetic dentistry and teeth whitening, betterhealth.vic.gov.au (reviewed 12 December 2025); Dentures, betterhealth.vic.gov.au (reviewed 4 August 2026); Root canal treatment, betterhealth.vic.gov.au (reviewed 14 July 2025). All accessed 6 November 2026.

Cost, pace and the part nobody mentions

Three practical matters are covered in the published advice and rarely discussed on a treatment page: how long you are entitled to take, what public and benefit pathways exist, and the emotional side of losing teeth.

How long you can take. "If it is a simple procedure, it may be done on the day. If it is a complex procedure, you may need time to think about your options, or see specialists over multiple visits."

Replacing a tooth is in the second category more often than not, and the Department treats multiple visits and more than one opinion as the normal shape of such a decision rather than as hesitation.

What to ask. "What options are available and the pros and the cons of each option."; "What results can be reasonably expected."; "What costs, time and money, are involved and if payment options are available."; "Any possible side effects or complications."

On relative cost, the published position names one option. Of dentures: "This is the most cost-effective way of replacing multiple teeth", and they "are usually more affordable than other tooth/teeth replacement options". Beyond that, "private dentists and dental practitioners set their own fees, which can vary depending on the practitioner and the type of treatment required".

Public dental care, for those who qualify. The Department's eligibility includes "all children aged 0-12 years"; "young people aged 13-17 years who hold a healthcare or pensioner concession card, or who are dependants of concession card holders"; "people aged 18 years and over, who are health care or pensioner concession card holders or dependants of concession card holders"; "all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people"; and "all refugees and asylum seekers".

Denture care has its own pathway: "If the person has denture care needs, then they will be offered the next available appointment for denture care or placed on the priority denture waiting list." Otherwise, "all other people seeking routine dental or denture care need to place their name on a waiting list" — and we are not going to quote a waiting time, because the published material gives none.

Who can make a denture. "Dentures can be made for you by a dentist, dental prosthetist (advanced dental technician) or specialist prosthodontist." Prosthodontics is one of the "13 dental specialties in Australia which are approved by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council", and Ahpra's register "includes details of the specialty or specialties for dentists who hold specialist registration".

And the part nobody mentions. "You may need to take some time to prepare yourself emotionally for getting dentures. Research has found that tooth loss can cause emotions such as grief, denial, anger and depression. You may feel a loss of confidence or feel self-conscious when eating, talking or

smiling."

That is the Victorian Department of Health, on a clinical page. It also notes practically that "people often report that new dentures feel unusual and take a while to adjust to", and that "it can take a month or so to get used to the feeling of having something new in the mouth. Speaking and eating will feel a little different at the start, but most people get used to it."

One timing detail that affects the plan. After extractions, "measurements usually start about two to three months after your teeth have been taken out. This allows time for the gum and bone to heal and settle which means that the denture has a better fit from the start." The alternative, immediate dentures, is available but "changes to the bone after the teeth are removed may cause the denture to become loose over time and it may need to be adjusted and 'relined' within a few months".

And nothing here is once-and-done. "All dentures may need to be replaced or relined after a period of time, as your gums change with age."

Sources: Better Health Channel (Victorian Department of Health), Dentures, betterhealth.vic.gov.au (reviewed 4 August 2026); Cosmetic dentistry and teeth whitening, betterhealth.vic.gov.au (reviewed 12 December 2025); Dental checks for young children, betterhealth.vic.gov.au (reviewed 11 February 2026); Victorian Department of Health, Access to Victoria's public dental care services, health.vic.gov.au ; Dental Board of Australia, Specialist Registration, dentalboard.gov.au (the page states it was reviewed 18/03/2025). All accessed 6 November 2026.

Frequently asked questions

Can a missing tooth be replaced if I was born without it?

Yes. Replacement options such as an implant, a bridge or a denture can be considered whether a tooth was lost or never developed. Your dentist will examine your mouth and may take imaging to see which option suits your teeth, gums and jawbone.

Do I have to replace a missing tooth?

Not always, and the decision is personal. A gap can affect chewing, speech and appearance, and neighbouring teeth may shift over time. Your dentist can explain the likely effects in your case and discuss the options, including leaving the space.

What is the difference between an implant and a bridge?

An implant replaces the tooth root and sits in the jawbone, while a bridge is supported by the natural teeth beside the gap. Your dentist will compare the two based on the health of those neighbouring teeth, your bone and your goals.

Can I get a denture on the same day a tooth is removed?

In some circumstances a dentist may provide an immediate denture at the same appointment as the extraction. This can avoid a gap while healing, although the fit may need adjustments as your gums change.

How long does a replacement tooth last?

It varies. Longevity depends on the type of replacement, your oral hygiene, gum health, habits such as grinding, and regular maintenance. Your dentist can talk through what to expect for the option you

choose.

Why can nobody tell me my options over the phone?

Because the options depend on what is there. For an implant, "the area of the missing tooth needs to be studied to make sure it is suitable", which includes "the gum and bone health, amount of space, your bite, and your general health". A partial denture needs "your remaining teeth and gums to be in good health", and a bridge depends on the teeth either side.

Could the tooth still be saved instead?

Worth asking. Where the pulp is affected, root canal treatment means "a tooth can function without its pulp and, in most cases, can be kept indefinitely", and the Department's general position is that practitioners "aim to help you keep your natural teeth for as long as possible".

What should be done before any replacement?

"Treat any disease first. Your health is the priority." The Department's first step in any plan is "to make sure your teeth and mouth are in good health".

Do I have to decide at the first appointment?

No. "If it is a simple procedure, it may be done on the day. If it is a complex procedure, you may need time to think about your options, or see specialists over multiple visits."

Which option usually costs least?

Dentures, on the published account: "This is the most cost-effective way of replacing multiple teeth", and they "are usually more affordable than other tooth/teeth replacement options". Beyond that, "private dentists and dental practitioners set their own fees".

Is there public dental care for this?

For those who qualify. Eligibility includes concession or healthcare card holders aged 18 and over and their dependants, children aged 0-12, young people aged 13-17 with a card or as dependants, "all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people", and "all refugees and asylum seekers". Denture care has its own pathway: those with denture needs "will be offered the next available appointment for denture care or placed on the priority denture waiting list".

How long is the wait?

The published material does not say, so we are not going to quote a figure. What it does say is that "all other people seeking routine dental or denture care need to place their name on a waiting list".

Who can make a denture?

"Dentures can be made for you by a dentist, dental prosthetist (advanced dental technician) or specialist prosthodontist." Prosthodontics is one of the 13 recognised dental specialties, and specialist registration appears on Ahpra's public register.

How soon after extractions can a denture be fitted?

"Measurements usually start about two to three months after your teeth have been taken out. This allows time for the gum and bone to heal and settle." Immediate dentures are an alternative, but "changes to the bone after the teeth are removed may cause the denture to become loose over time".

How long does it take to get used to a denture?

"It can take a month or so to get used to the feeling of having something new in the mouth. Speaking and eating will feel a little different at the start, but most people get used to it." The Department also notes that "people often report that new dentures feel unusual and take a while to adjust to".

Is it normal to find losing a tooth upsetting?

Yes, and the Department says so on a clinical page: "Research has found that tooth loss can cause emotions such as grief, denial, anger and depression. You may feel a loss of confidence or feel self-conscious when eating, talking or smiling." It suggests you "may need to take some time to prepare yourself emotionally".

Will a denture last indefinitely?

No. "All dentures may need to be replaced or relined after a period of time, as your gums change with age."

Related services and further reading

Dental implants

Conventional implants

Dental bridges

Dentures

Implant-retained dentures

Dental crowns

Dentists and registered specialists

Replacement options for missing teeth

Dentures or implants for seniors

How can we help?

If you are missing a tooth and would like to talk through your options, our team can help at any of our nine Core Dental practices. Call 13 13 16 or book online, and we will arrange an examination so your dentist can explain what may suit you. You can also read what to expect at your first Core Dental appointment .

Core Dental at a glance

Nine Core Dental clinics across Melbourne: Southbank, South Melbourne, Caroline Springs, Carrum Downs, Epping, Wyndham, Berwick, Bayside and Glenferrie.

Open six days a week: Monday to Friday 8.00am to 6.00pm and Saturday mornings.

We quote before treatment starts and offer interest-free payment plans, with HICAPS on-site claiming.

Call 13 13 16 or book online.

Contact Core Dental

Phone	13 13 16
Booking	Online via coredental.com.au, or call 13 13 16
Hours	Monday to Friday 8.00am to 6.00pm, Saturday mornings, Sunday closed
Clinics	Southbank, South Melbourne, Caroline Springs, Carrum Downs, Epping, Wyndham, Berwick, Bayside, Glenferrie

This article is general in nature and does not replace advice from a registered dental practitioner who has examined you. Results, recovery times and potential risks vary for each individual. This information is intended for people over 18. Seek advice from a qualified, AHPRA-registered practitioner before proceeding.

What are the main ways to replace a missing tooth?

Core Dental dentists may discuss three main options for a missing tooth: a dental implant, a dental bridge or a removable denture. Which one suits you depends on your teeth, gums, jawbone and goals, assessed at an examination.

What is a dental implant made of and how is it attached?

A dental implant is an artificial tooth root placed in the jawbone, with a crown attached through a connector called an abutment. At Core Dental our dentists first check bone volume and gum health to see whether an implant may suit you.

What is a pontic in a dental bridge?

A pontic is the artificial tooth in a dental bridge. It is suspended between the natural teeth on either side of the gap, which are prepared to support it. Core Dental dentists review those supporting teeth before recommending a bridge.

Are there clips that hold a denture to implants?

Yes. In some cases attachments or clips are placed on implants to hold a denture steady, known as an overdenture. Core Dental dentists can explain whether implant-retained dentures may suit your jaw and gum condition.

What is an immediate denture?

An immediate denture is a denture provided at the same appointment as a tooth extraction, so you avoid having a gap while you heal. Core Dental dentists may suggest one in some circumstances, and the fit may need adjustment later.

Which problems need to be treated before replacing a tooth?

Decay, gum disease, tooth grinding and clenching should be diagnosed and managed before replacing a tooth, as they may have caused the loss. Core Dental dentists assess these at your examination and plan care around them.

Do you work with specialists for complex tooth replacement?

Yes. If your case is complex, Core Dental general dentists can work with our registered specialists, such as prosthodontists or periodontists, as part of your plan. Ask when booking about specialist availability at your nearest clinic.

How do I book a consultation about replacing a tooth at Core Dental?

Call 13 13 16 or book online through coredental.com.au. Mention which tooth is missing and any medical conditions or medicines. Core Dental clinics are open Monday to Friday 8.00am to 6.00pm and Saturday mornings.