Replacement Options for Missing Teeth | Core Dental

Canonical: https://www.coredental.com.au/replacement-options-missing-teeth/

Details:

The main options for replacing missing teeth are dental implants, dental bridges and removable dentures. Which of them suits you depends on the position and number of teeth you are missing, the health of your gums and bone, and your general health. An implant replaces the tooth root, a bridge suspends an artificial tooth from neighbouring teeth, and a denture can be taken out for cleaning. At Core Dental our dentists will examine you, explain the options and give you a written quote before treatment starts.

Why is it important to replace missing teeth?

Missing teeth can affect your appearance, your confidence and how well your mouth works. A gap can change how your smile looks, make it harder to chew and speak clearly, and increase the risk of dental problems such as decay and gum disease. Neighbouring teeth can also drift or tilt into the space over time, which can alter your bite. Talking to a dentist soon after a tooth is lost gives you more time to plan the option that suits you.

What are dental implants, and how do they work?

A dental implant is an artificial tooth root placed in the jawbone to replace one or more missing teeth. A titanium screw is placed surgically into the bone, where it fuses with the bone over time and acts like the root of a natural tooth. An artificial tooth or crown is then attached to the implant through a connector called an abutment.

You can read more about the options we offer on our dental implants pages, including conventional implants .

What are the advantages of dental implants?

Dental implants are designed to look and function like a natural tooth. In general terms, they:

are shaped to resemble natural teeth in form and function

do not need to be removed for cleaning and maintenance

offer a long-term way to replace a tooth

are independent of the adjacent teeth, so if a problem arises, it is usually only the implant that is affected

Like any treatment, implants carry risks and limitations, and results vary between individuals.

Are dental implants suitable for everyone?

No. Implants usually involve a higher initial cost than some other replacement options, and they may not be suitable for everyone. Your dentist will consider factors such as diabetes and how well it is

controlled, whether there is enough bone density to support an implant, and whether an implant would sit close to the sinuses. Smoking and gum disease can also affect how well an implant heals and lasts. If an implant is not suitable, a bridge or a denture may be an alternative.

What is a dental bridge?

A bridge replaces one or more missing teeth by suspending an artificial tooth, called a pontic, from the natural teeth on either side of the gap. The adjacent teeth are first prepared so that they can support the bridge. Because a bridge sits close to the gum, it can blend into the smile and look natural. Our page on dental bridges explains the process in more detail.

What is a removable denture?

Depending on how many teeth you are missing, your dentist will often recommend a partial denture. A full denture is available for people who have lost all of their natural teeth in the upper or lower jaw. Dentures can be made from acrylic or metal, and your dentist will talk with you about the materials that may suit your situation.

In some cases your dentist may provide an immediate denture at the same appointment as a tooth extraction. This means you do not have to live with a gap while you heal. You can find out more on our dentures page, including implant-retained dentures .

What needs to be checked before replacing teeth?

Before any replacement option goes ahead, your dentist needs to diagnose problems such as decay, gum disease, tooth grinding and clenching. These problems may have been the reason you lost your teeth, so managing them first supports the success and lifespan of whichever option you choose.

Your case may not be entirely straightforward. Some treatments involve a team of registered dental specialists, for example a prosthodontist, periodontist or orthodontist, to look after both the appearance and the function of your teeth. At Core Dental our general dentists work with registered specialists where they are involved in your care, and we plan treatment together.

What should you expect after your teeth are replaced?

Regardless of the option you choose, a replacement may not look or feel exactly like your original tooth. Getting used to a replacement is an adjustment process, and our dentists will help make that transition period as smooth as we can. Regular maintenance and check-ups should also be planned so that your replacement teeth stay in good condition.

How do cost and payment work?

Costs differ between implants, bridges and dentures, and they depend on the number of teeth, the materials and the complexity of your case. At Core Dental we quote before treatment starts, so you know the cost in advance. We offer interest-free payment plans through Payright, with terms and eligibility that apply (3 to 30 months, plans up to $20,000), and HICAPS claiming on site. Fees and terms published at September 2026 should be confirmed with your clinic.

The three replacement options, each with its published trade-off

The published advice describes three ways to replace a missing tooth, and each one has a stated cost somewhere other than the invoice. Seeing them together is more useful than any single comparison.

Option one: a bridge. "Metal or ceramic crowns that are attached onto supporting teeth to replace one or more missing teeth." Its risks, in the Victorian Department of Health's words: "It can chip or break and need replacing again."; that sometimes the supporting teeth need little preparation, while "other times bridges may involve removing a lot of healthy tooth structure on either side of the missing tooth. In some cases this can get close to the nerve and blood vessels inside the tooth (pulp) and the tooth may need further treatment, like a root canal treatment."; that "it can be very difficult to clean under the bridge. Tooth decay and gum disease around bridges can be very difficult to treat and in severe cases the supporting teeth may develop problems as a result."; and that "it is irreversible for the surrounding teeth; once a tooth is cut for a crown to support a bridge, it will always need a crown."

The cost is paid by the neighbouring teeth. That is the trade-off, and it is the reason the implant description makes a point of the contrast.

Option two: an implant. "A dental implant is made of 2 main parts: a titanium screw that fuses with the jaw bone and a ceramic tooth that fits over the screw", and it "replaces a missing tooth or teeth, without damaging neighbouring teeth."

Its costs are time and conditions. "It can take up to 6 months for the bone to fuse strongly to the screw." The bone may not fuse at all, with greater risk for people who "smoke; have diabetes; have some bone conditions such as osteoporosis; are immune compromised". Cleaning is harder — "gum disease around an implant can be very difficult to treat. If severe, the implant will need to be removed. This area may no longer be suitable for future implants." And "depending on your anatomy, there may be some risk of damage to nearby structures like nerves or sinuses."

Option three: a denture. "Full dentures are for people who have no teeth left at all. Partial dentures are for people who have one or more teeth left." On cost the Department is direct: "This is the most cost-effective way of replacing multiple teeth", and its dentures page says they "are usually more affordable than other tooth/teeth replacement options".

Its trade-offs are stability and adjustment. "It is difficult to make dentures as stable as your own natural teeth." And: "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." On cleaning: "It is important to remove dentures every night for cleaning. If it is not cleaned properly, food can get caught and lead to decay of neighbouring teeth and gum disease."

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). Both accessed 6 November 2026.

Why replacing a tooth matters, and why timing does

Two published points are easy to miss. One is that a gap has consequences beyond appearance. The other is that waiting narrows the options.

Chewing, and what follows from it. The Department: "Missing teeth can make it difficult to chew food. This might make it difficult to get the nutrients your body needs which can affect your health."

Its orthodontic advice makes the same point about gaps between teeth: "Eating and chewing may be difficult when there are big gaps, or when teeth do not bite together properly. This can affect your nutrition and digestion."

Bone loss narrows what is possible. On an infected tooth that is eventually lost, the Department warns: "loss of tooth - the tooth may have to be removed, which can affect eating or appearance. Tooth replacement options are available but may be limited if the infection has already caused advanced bone loss."

That is the clearest published argument against waiting: the menu above gets shorter.

And for dentures there is a specific waiting period after extraction. "If you have recently had teeth removed, 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."

If being without teeth for that period is not acceptable, there is a published alternative with its own caveat: "Immediate dentures may be considered when you do not wish to be without teeth for two to three months. Denture measurements begin before the teeth are taken out, so that the dentures are ready to be put in at the same time your teeth are removed. 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 to improve the fit. Sometimes, there may be a need to remake the denture if there is a lot of bone and gum shrinkage."

Dentures are not a one-off either. "All dentures may need to be replaced or relined after a period of time, as your gums change with age." And for a partial denture, "it is important for your remaining teeth and gums to be in good health, to support the partial denture."

Who makes them. "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 public register "includes details of the specialty or specialties for dentists who hold specialist registration".

The option the Department puts first, though. "In the past, people often had their natural teeth pulled out when there was a problem and had them replaced with false teeth (dentures). These days, dental practitioners aim to help you keep your natural teeth for as long as possible." And: "With good care, teeth can last a lifetime."

Keeping the tooth is the first option, and for a tooth with an infected pulp that is what root canal treatment is for — after which "a tooth can function without its pulp and, in most cases, can be kept indefinitely", with the Department's own caveat that "no therapy or replacement will last as well as a healthy tooth".

One thing worth naming. The Department acknowledges that losing teeth is not only a mechanical problem: "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 for getting dentures".

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); Root canal treatment, betterhealth.vic.gov.au (reviewed 14 July 2025); Orthodontic treatment, betterhealth.vic.gov.au (reviewed 15 December 2025); 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

How do I know which option is right for me?

It depends on the position and number of missing teeth, your gum and bone health, your general health and your preferences. A dentist needs to examine you, and may take X-rays, before explaining which options are suitable.

Do I need to have decay or gum disease treated first?

Usually yes. Problems such as decay, gum disease, grinding and clenching should be diagnosed and managed before replacement teeth are made or placed. This supports the lifespan of your treatment.

Can I have a tooth replaced on the same day as an extraction?

In some cases. Your dentist may provide an immediate denture at the same appointment as your extraction so that you are not without a tooth while you heal. Whether this suits you depends on your situation.

Will a replacement tooth feel exactly like my natural tooth?

Not necessarily. Any replacement may look or feel a little different from your original tooth, and it takes time to adjust. Your dentist will explain what to expect and will help you through the adjustment period.

Who can place dental implants at Core Dental?

Implant treatment is planned by a registered dentist and may involve registered specialists. You can check any practitioner's registration on the AHPRA register at ahpra.gov.au, and ask your clinic which practitioners will be involved in your care.

What are the options for replacing a missing tooth?

Three in the published advice: a bridge, "metal or ceramic crowns that are attached onto supporting teeth"; an implant, "a titanium screw that fuses with the jaw bone and a ceramic tooth that fits over the screw"; and a denture, full or partial.

What is the downside of a bridge?

It involves the neighbouring teeth. "Bridges may involve removing a lot of healthy tooth structure on either side of the missing tooth", this "can get close to the nerve and blood vessels inside the tooth (pulp)", and "it is irreversible for the surrounding teeth". The Department also warns that "it can be very difficult to clean under the bridge".

What is the main advantage of an implant?

It "replaces a missing tooth or teeth, without damaging neighbouring teeth."

What are the drawbacks of an implant?

Time and conditions. "It can take up to 6 months for the bone to fuse strongly to the screw"; the bone may not fuse, with greater risk for people who "smoke; have diabetes; have some bone conditions such as osteoporosis; are immune compromised"; cleaning is harder, and severe gum disease around one means "the implant will need to be removed. This area may no longer be suitable for future implants"; and "depending on your anatomy, there may be some risk of damage to nearby structures like nerves or sinuses".

Which option usually costs least?

Dentures. The Department calls them "the most cost-effective way of replacing multiple teeth" and notes they "are usually more affordable than other tooth/teeth replacement options".

What are the drawbacks of dentures?

"It is difficult to make dentures as stable as your own natural teeth", and "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." They also need nightly cleaning: "If it is not cleaned properly, food can get caught and lead to decay of neighbouring teeth and gum disease."

Why not just leave the gap?

Because of chewing, and what follows from it. "Missing teeth can make it difficult to chew food. This might make it difficult to get the nutrients your body needs which can affect your health."

Does waiting change my options?

It can. On a tooth lost to infection, the Department warns that "tooth replacement options are available but may be limited if the infection has already caused advanced bone loss".

How soon after an extraction can a denture be made?

"If you have recently had teeth removed, 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."

What if I do not want to be without teeth for that long?

"Immediate dentures may be considered when you do not wish to be without teeth for two to three months", with measurements beginning before the teeth come out. The caveat is that "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".

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.

Is keeping the tooth still an option?

It is the one the Department puts first. "These days, dental practitioners aim to help you keep your natural teeth for as long as possible", and "with good care, teeth can last a lifetime". Where the pulp is infected, root canal treatment means "a tooth can function without its pulp and, in most cases, can be kept indefinitely".

Related services and further reading

Dental implants

Dental bridges

Dentures

Implant-retained dentures

Prosthodontics

I'm missing a tooth: what are my options?

Dentures or implants for seniors

All about dental implants

How can we help?

If you are missing a tooth, or you would like to compare implants, bridges and dentures, our team can examine your mouth and talk through your options at any of our nine practices. Call 13 13 16 or book online. You can also read about 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.

HICAPS on-site claiming, and bulk billing for eligible children under the Child Dental Benefits Schedule.

Contact Core Dental

Phone	13 13 16
Booking	Online through coredental.com.au, or call 13 13 16
Hours	Monday to Friday 8.00am to 6.00pm, Saturday 8.00am to 1.30pm (Bayside Saturday 8.30am to 1.30pm), Sunday closed
Clinics	Southbank , South Melbourne , Caroline Springs , Carrum Downs , Epping , Wyndham , Berwick , Bayside , Glenferrie

Results, recovery times and potential risks vary for each individual. This information is general in nature and is intended for people over 18. Seek advice from a qualified, AHPRA-registered practitioner before proceeding.

What options can replace a missing tooth?

The main options are a dental implant, a dental bridge or a removable denture. Core Dental dentists examine your mouth, consider the position and number of missing teeth and your health, and explain which options may suit you.

How does a dental implant replace a tooth?

A titanium screw is placed into the jawbone, where it fuses with the bone and acts like a tooth root. A crown is attached to it with a connector called an abutment. Core Dental dentists can explain whether you are suitable.

Who might not be suitable for dental implants?

Implants may be unsuitable for people with poorly controlled diabetes, inadequate bone density, or where an implant would sit close to the sinuses. Smoking and gum disease can also affect results. A Core Dental dentist will assess your suitability.

How does a dental bridge work?

A bridge suspends an artificial tooth, called a pontic, from the natural teeth on either side of a gap. Those teeth are prepared first so they can support the bridge. Core Dental dentists can explain whether a bridge suits your teeth.

What is an immediate denture?

An immediate denture is fitted at the same appointment as a tooth extraction so you are not without teeth while you heal. Core Dental dentists can advise whether an immediate denture is suitable for your situation.

What should be treated before missing teeth are replaced?

Decay, gum disease, tooth grinding and clenching should be diagnosed and managed first, because they may have caused the tooth loss. Core Dental dentists check for these during your examination and plan treatment in a sensible order.

Can replacement teeth be paid for in instalments at Core Dental?

Core Dental offers interest-free Payright plans over 3 to 30 months for up to $20,000, subject to eligibility, and we quote before treatment starts. Figures published as at September 2026 should be confirmed with your clinic.

How do I book a missing teeth consultation at Core Dental?

Call 13 13 16 or book online at coredental.com.au. We have nine clinics across Melbourne, open Monday to Friday 8.00am to 6.00pm and Saturday mornings, so our team can examine your mouth and explain your replacement options.