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MODEL FOR LIFE

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# Dental Implants

## The Need For Speed

By Dr. Dan Hagi



**R**ome was not built in one day. Although not as grand, the foundation for implant supported dentistry is not something that can be achieved without careful planning and foresight. "Same Day

Dental Implants", "Teeth in a Day", "Teeth in an Hour" are marketing concepts focused on the need to speed up the process of providing our patients with teeth.

Implant dentistry is one of the greatest dental advancements of our time. By surgically placing a titanium post (the implant) into the jaw, we can provide our patients a replacement of missing teeth. The implanted titanium post mimics the root of a tooth and once stable, a crown is added for superior dental function. This eliminates the need for bridge-work, partial and full dentures or living with missing teeth. The titanium posts require healthy bone to grow around them in order to be strong enough and provide stress bearing support.

The typical implant patient that comes into the office has no teeth, only uncomfortable dentures. The beginning of the process is a complete exam and imaging. This is followed up with an aesthetic determination of where the teeth need to be and the selection of tooth shapes, colour and size. The

next question is the amount and quality of bone into which the implants need to be placed, if not enough bone is present then augmentation of the bone is necessary which usually takes 6-9 months. Once the bone is deemed ready for implants, the surgery is booked and implants are placed, a minimum of 3-6 months are needed to allow for complete healing. Only then can the fabrication of the final prosthesis begin. During all this time typically 12-18 months, the patient is still walking around in uncomfortable dentures. Can we do something that would make our patients more comfortable?

The original protocols in implant dentistry called for undisturbed healing of the implant

before a load (force) could be placed on it. This "healing period" traditionally ranged between 3-6 months. Only after this "healing period" has passed were implants to be loaded. In the original thinking the early loading on the implants would disturb the healing and lead to failures. With new technology and



improvement in implant design we began to shorten the "healing period". We also discovered that healing of the implants is different in different locations of the mouth. For example, implants in the lower jaw tend to do better than ones in the upper jaw. With over 100 different implants on the market, each with different characteristics, companies have been pushing to find new ways of providing teeth faster.

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Typically if we leave an implant to heal in the bone undisturbed we still need to temporarily deal with the gap. We do this with either a temporary bridge or denture ? or we get more creative! What if we put the tooth on the implant right away? Well, we found that if we are able to achieve good initial stability of the implant at time of surgery we are able to provide our patients an aesthetic temporary restoration; the birth of "immediate temporization". This temporary implant restoration is meant to be purely cosmetic and non-functional, allowing the implant to heal while providing the patient excellent aesthetics.

Some stretched this concept further and started to load, or place a force, on these implants during the "healing period". This has been met with much criticism. The healing of the bone is a slow process, even small movements can cause incomplete bone healing and subject the implants to future complications. However, if we are dealing with more than 1 implant, is splinting those teeth together a way to reduce the stress on each implant and allow for "immediate loading"?

Research has shown that by distributing the force over several implants we are able to provide some of our patients with "immediately loaded" restorations. If our patient satisfies some specific criteria and enough implants are placed in the jaw then we are able to secure a prosthesis (permanent or temporary) to the implants on the day of surgery. This prosthesis will be loaded every time the patient closes his/her mouth, chews, speaks or smiles. This places the whole system at a somewhat greater risk for complications if some important criteria is overlooked, the right case selection is imperative and not all patients may be good candidates for such treatment. When doctors advertise their dental implant procedures as "Teeth in a Day™", "One Hour Implants", "Same Day Dental Implants", they are alluding to the immediate or front load implant procedures. Don't be misled or confused by claims and advertisements suggesting dental implants only take one

day or hour of your time, because they don't. These advertisements are confusing because multiple appointments are always needed for any implant case.

In cases where a patient needs to replace all their teeth, the Eat, Smile and Chew Today solution may be the perfect fit. Unlike traditional implants, the Eat, Smile and Chew Today approach does not require extensive bone grafts for patients with low bone mass. Patients told they are not candidates for dental implants now can get a beautiful new set of teeth after a single surgical appointment. Eat, Smile and Chew Today dentistry makes use of two full jaw bridges to replace all the teeth. After comprehensive examination and planning, six or more dental implants are installed in each jaw. The replacement teeth are mounted on the dental implants the same day, and you can eat, smile and chew right away with your new teeth.

Dentistry's goals are to provide our patients with the best long term success. This can be achieved only by personalizing treatment for every case. Not every patient may be a candidate for "immediate loading" or "immediate temporization". Although traditional implant procedures can't offer same day restorations or crowns, they do help a broader spectrum of people wanting a permanent, low-maintenance, aesthetic, functional solution to missing teeth. Depending on the person and which arch of the jaw is being worked on, the process can take three to eighteen months, multiple minor surgeries, and can involve some sort of temporary bridgework or removable appliance. While a bit more inconvenient, it is totally worth it ? knowing the smile will be superiorly restored. The idea is to use all the tools that we have and provide our patients the best care possible.

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