



CONFIDENCE BEGINS WITH A GREAT SMILE!



**By: Steven D. Spitz, DMD
Prosthodontist/Dental
Implant Specialist**

A few months back, a friend of mine read an article I wrote for this publication. After reading it, he asked me what exactly a 'Prosthodontist' does, and when dental implants can be used.

Although people know that the Orthodontist places braces and that the Periodontist takes care of your gums, most individuals do not know what a Prosthodontist does.

What's a Prosthodontist?

A Prosthodontist helps you to smile. In other words, **a Prosthodontist has the post-doctoral training required to restore and re-create your smile** the way you want it to be. They also have the ability to recognize disease and more severe dental issues that a general dentist may or may not recognize.

According to the American Dental Association, Prosthodontics is, 'that branch of dentistry pertaining to the restoration and maintenance of your teeth'. The advancements in cosmetic treatments through crowns, veneers, clear braces, tooth whitening (in about an hour), etc., have allowed more diverse and predictable results for dental patients.

Dental implants, which are a key facet of dentistry, have advanced dramatically over the past five years. The progressive techniques involved with placing and maintaining dental implants has allowed us as individuals to create how we want to look and feel in regard to our mouth and our smiles.

This is a great time to be in the field of dentistry.

What are dental implants?

Dental implants are titanium posts that **re-create the roots of the teeth** on which a crown (single tooth), bridge (multiple connected teeth), or denture is secured. Implants are surgically placed in the bone under your gums. During a healing period, the bone grows around the implant. Then a replacement tooth, or crown, is attached to the metal post, giving you a restoration that is a lot like your natural tooth. Implants also can be used to secure bridges and dentures when more than one tooth is missing.



*Confidence begins with
a great
smile.*

Does a Prosthodontist place dental implants?

Not usually. Very few Prosthodontists perform surgical treatments; including the placement of dental implants. The way it usually works is that once you have decided that dental implants are for you, you would see an oral surgeon or a periodontist for the actual surgery and placement and then see a Prosthodontist or in some cases a general dentist for the restorations; crowns, bridges, fixed dentures, etc.

However, there are a handful of Prosthodontists in the New England area that have the formal education, training and experience to place dental implants as well as other surgical aspects of dentistry; **you can have all of your treatment completed in one office, by one doctor.** Check with your Prosthodontist or ask if this is the case when investigating dental implants.

Who is a candidate for dental implants?

Anyone, at any age, can be fitted for implants, as long as their health allows. As I mentioned before, there have been great advancements in implants. Even if you have been told in the past that you are not 'a candidate' for implants, there are options. **Look for a specialist that has the experience and training necessary to place a variety of implants, rather than just one type,** and the ability to build up the bone around the implant site if necessary to give you the smile you deserve.

What does an implant cost?

The cost of an implant will vary depending upon a few factors; including the dental specialist and the individual treatment required to successfully complete treatment. The cost for a specialist that completes the entire treatment can range between \$1000-\$1700 per implant. Keep in mind that this is the cost of the surgical phase of placing the implant; the prosthetic phase will be a separate part of the treatment and will vary in cost since treatment will vary with each individual. **When pricing this type of treatment, ask for a treatment plan that includes the entire treatment, including x-rays, follow-up etc.**

What type of financing is available and does insurance cover any part of it?

Each individual has different financial concerns. Some insurance policies have implant riders that pay for a portion of the treatment. Check with your individual plan to see if you have it or can add it to your policy. There are also many practices that have **pre-arranged financing through various financial institutions.** Short-term, long-term, and interest-free plans are available for

those who qualify. Ask your dental professional what options they have available.

How long can implants last?

Dental implants can last a lifetime. Current research shows that with proper maintenance, today's implants can last at least 10-15 years. Note that consistent hygiene care is necessary to maintain health of your mouth and the implants.

How will I be feeling after having the implant placed?

It is important to note that the surgical aspect of implants varies by the professional, and each individual heals differently. In my office, for example, we use a local anesthetic for most patients and offer conscious sedation for those patients that are fearful or are having a significant amount of implants placed. As with any surgical procedure, we suggest that you have the procedure in the morning and take the rest of the day off. In most cases, you can return to work the following day. The discomfort from the surgery is usually due to having your mouth open for an extended period of time, not necessarily from the surgical site. **In most cases, my patients have told me that they were surprised that they felt fine after the procedure.**

No matter what your dental needs, it is essential to learn what is right for your specific care; ask questions, search the internet and talk to friends that have had dental treatment. Above all ask your dental professional. They welcome your questions and want you to understand your options.

For more information or to schedule a consultation, please contact Dr. Spitz at 617-437-1060.

Publisher's Note

I recently had some work done on my teeth by Dr. Spitz, and nobody has ever gone to such efforts to make me feel as comfortable and relaxed. He genuinely cared about my entire well-being rather than simply going through the motions to get me out of the chair as quickly as possible. If you are as nervous as I am about seeing the dentist, I highly recommend seeing Dr. Spitz for your next appointment.

Steven D. Spitz, DMD is founder and principal of Smileboston™ Cosmetic and Implant Dentistry; a Boston-based dental office concentrating in full-mouth dental care. Dr. Spitz is the only prosthodontist in New England treating patients with the Waterlase® MD, utilizing dental lasers for treatment, dental implant placement, tooth restoration and full mouth rehabilitation. He lectures nationally and internationally on the advanced applications of lasers and implant dentistry, and has been honored as Best Cosmetic Dentist by the Improper Bostonian and mentioned as, "One of the most reputable places in Boston for cosmetic procedures" by Boston Magazine. Dr. Spitz, who treats all facets of dentistry, welcomes your questions.

Office: 617 437 1060

Email:

Smileboston@verizon.net

Website:

www.smileboston.com

