

Replacing Your Lost Tooth



Losing a front tooth can be embarrassing because it affects your looks and your speech.

Losing a back tooth can affect how well you chew your food.

Apart from these, losing any tooth can adversely affect the health of your gums and teeth.

What happens when a tooth is lost?

The loss of a tooth affects your health in several ways. The diagram below shows an example of what can happen when a lower back tooth (molar) is lost. The teeth on either side of the empty space tilt towards the space (small arrows). The tooth in the upper jaw will continue to grow downwards or over-erupt (big arrow) because it no longer has a tooth to bite on.



Legend:
Red: Gum
Black: Tooth decay
Dotted: Bone
Hatched: Food & bacteria

As a result of this tilting and over-eruption, the teeth are no longer in alignment and there are uneven contacts between the teeth. The tilting of teeth also creates areas between the teeth where food debris and bacteria collect. These areas are especially difficult to clean so tooth decay and gum disease often develop in these areas.

All these problems can be prevented by replacing the lost tooth. Replacing the lost tooth after the tilting and over-eruption have occurred, can be quite difficult.

Methods of replacing teeth

1. Dentures

Dentures are removable artificial teeth. They should be removed after every meal and cleaned. They should also be removed when you go to sleep. Dentures are most commonly used when several teeth need to be replaced.

Normally, after an extraction, one must wait a few months for the gums and bone to heal before dentures can be made.

In some cases, an immediate denture can be made before the extraction so that it can be worn immediately after the tooth is extracted. Such dentures are temporary and will need to be replaced within 6 months. During this period, the denture would need to be adjusted a few times to fit the healing gums and bone.

Dentures are the cheapest way of replacing lost teeth.

2. Bridges

Bridges are fixed artificial teeth, i.e. they are rigid and cannot be removed. A bridge can only replace a few teeth and requires good, strong natural teeth on either side of the empty space to support the artificial teeth.

3. Implants

Implants are the latest technology available to help replace missing teeth. An implant is a device that is inserted directly into the bone at the site of the missing teeth. This requires surgery. After about 4-6 months, when the bone around the implant has healed, artificial teeth can be constructed over the implants.

As implants involve surgery, extra time and new technology, they are the most expensive method of replacing teeth.

Every method has its advantages and disadvantages. Your dentist is the best person to discuss these with you and help you decide the best way to replace your lost tooth.



A Dental Health Education Leaflet by the
Singapore Dental Health Foundation
www.dentalhealth.org.sg

Sponsored by **Oral-B**
The Brand More Dentists Use Themselves

www.oralb.com

如何取代您所失去的牙齿



缺少一颗门牙，会影响发音和外观；缺少一颗大牙，则会影响咀嚼食物的能力。此外，失去任何一颗牙齿，也会影响其他牙齿与牙龈的健康。

失去一颗牙齿将会有怎样的后果？

失去一颗牙齿，对一个人的健康，将会产生多方面的影响。例如，失去一颗下颚的大牙后，前后的牙齿会向空处处歪斜（小箭头），而上颚的大牙也会因失去咬合的对象而继续向下



生长，造成牙齿过长（大箭头所示）。结果，牙齿的排列显得不整齐，而牙齿之间接触不良及歪斜，食物便会嵌塞在缝隙间，难以清除而导致牙蛀。此外，牙龈也因此易受细菌感染而形成牙龈病。

如果失去的牙齿及时被取代，上述的问题就不会发生了。

取代缺少的牙齿有以下三种方法

1) 假牙

一颗假牙或一副假牙用以取代一颗或多颗缺少的牙齿。假牙是安放在基托上，戴用者可随意取下。用餐后，假牙须取下清洗，睡眠时亦应取下假牙。

通常在拔牙后，病人需要等几个月的时间，让牙龈及牙骨康复，才印模做假牙。

有时，“临时假牙”可在拔牙之前就先做好，在拔牙之后可立即戴上。“临时假牙”只能在短期内使用，在六个月后须重做过。在这期间，也需要调整数次，以配合逐渐复原的牙龈与牙骨。

安装假牙的费用比其他方法来得便宜。

2) 牙桥

牙桥是固定的，它不能象假牙那样随意取下。

固定牙桥通常只用来取代数颗缺牙，它需要缺牙两旁的牙齿来支撑，因此缺牙左右两旁的牙齿必须是坚固的。

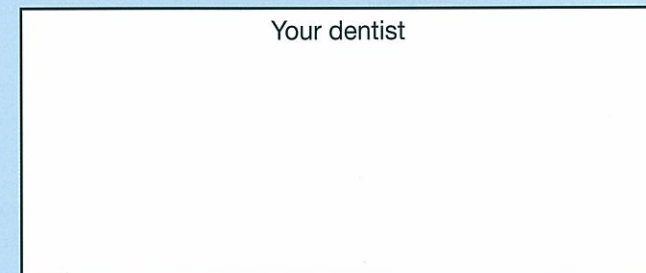
3) 种牙

种牙是目前最下先进的取代缺少的牙齿的方法。

种牙需要动手术把种植体放入骨内，然后等待四至六个月，让种植体与骨头有足够的时间结合，才能在种植体上做固定义齿。由于种牙需要动手术，使用先进器材及耗费较长时间，因此也是最昂贵的方法。

上述三种方法各有利弊。

您的牙医会根据个别的情况，为您选定最适合的取代缺少牙齿的方法。



A Dental Health Education Leaflet by the
Singapore Dental Health Foundation
www.dentalhealth.org.sg

Sponsored by



The Brand More Dentists
Use Themselves

www.oralb.com