

# Hybrid dentures can alleviate dental woes

BY DR. LEE SHELDON • FOR FLORIDA TODAY • June 13, 2010

You have a bad tooth. You go to the dentist and get the filling.

Then the tooth hurts. You need a root canal and a crown.

That's OK if it happens once or twice. But what happens if you go through this sequence again and again? Are there other answers?

Yes, there is another answer, an answer that doesn't decay, that has a better success rate than any form of tooth replacement: a dental implant. Along with the implant, you'll need a crown and a post to hold the crown onto the implant.

OK, you say, a dental implant will work, but I'm having this problem again and again and again. I can't afford a dental implant for every tooth that goes bad.

Well, there's lots of good news here. You don't have to replace every bad tooth with an implant.

Other people who have bad teeth, rather than continuing to replace them, opt out of the dental system. They wait for the ultimate to happen, and then they think that they'll have to have dentures.

Why? Dentures are less expensive, they don't wear out readily, and it's the only answer they know.

What would happen if you combine the lower cost of denture materials with implants?

You would have a tooth replacement system called a hybrid, a dental implant-supported denture with all the security of implants supported by bone, and a denture fastened to those implants. It wouldn't move and wouldn't cause denture sores.

It would be smaller so the roof of your mouth wouldn't be covered.

You would chew almost the way you did when you had healthy natural teeth. You wouldn't have to have your dentures removed if you had surgery. You wouldn't have to think about what you can and cannot order on the menu.

And in the event that a tooth broke, it would be a simple repair.

Implant-supported hybrid dentures are nothing new. They've been around for more than 25 years. They're generally used to replace full arches of missing teeth.

Almost everyone who is missing teeth still has enough bone support for a hybrid. And with the modern dental CT-scans, we can often find good implant-supporting bone we couldn't see on traditional X-rays.

So, if you've been missing teeth for years, you still qualify for a hybrid. And hybrids are cost-effective, costing roughly half of what a full arch of implant-supported crowns would cost.

Some of the happiest patients we have are ones who found an answer to the continual downward spiral of dental disease. They found hybrids, and are smiling and chewing better than they have in years.

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