

All-on-4 Dental Implants in Melbourne - Why the Team Behind Your Implants Matters More Than the Price

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Description:

All-on-4 Dental Implants in Melbourne - Why the Team Behind Your Implants Matters More Than the Price When you have lost most or all of your teeth, or you are facing the prospect of full dentures, ...

Details:

When you have lost most or all of your teeth, or you are facing the prospect of full dentures, All-on-4 dental implants offer a life-changing alternative. A full arch of fixed, natural-looking teeth supported by just four strategically placed implants - it sounds almost too good to be true. And in the wrong hands, it can be.

All-on-4 is not a simple procedure. It is a major surgical and prosthetic undertaking that requires the coordinated expertise of oral surgeons, prosthodontists, dental technicians, anaesthetists, and aftercare teams. Yet the growing popularity of full-arch implants has attracted a wide range of providers - from highly qualified specialist teams to solo general dentists, discount implant centres, and overseas dental tourism operators - all offering wildly different levels of care at wildly different price points.

This article is designed to help you understand what actually goes into a successful All-on-4 treatment, why the team behind your implants matters far more than the quoted price, and how to evaluate providers in Melbourne so you can make a truly informed decision.

What Are All-on-4 Dental Implants?

The All-on-4 treatment concept was developed by Dr Paulo Malo in Portugal and involves placing four titanium implants into the jawbone - two straight implants at the front and two angled implants at the back - to support a full arch of prosthetic teeth. The angled posterior implants maximise contact with available bone, often eliminating the need for bone grafting procedures.

When performed correctly by qualified specialists, All-on-4 can deliver:

- A fixed, non-removable set of teeth on the same day as surgery (provisional prosthesis) - Restored chewing function, speech, and aesthetics - Preservation of jawbone density - A long-term solution that can last decades with proper maintenance

However, the complexity of the procedure means that outcomes vary enormously depending on who performs the surgery, who designs the prosthesis, who manufactures it, and who manages your aftercare.

What to Look For in an All-on-4 Provider

1. Specialist Surgical Expertise

All-on-4 involves drilling into the jawbone, placing implants near critical structures like the inferior alveolar nerve and the sinus cavities, and managing surgical complications if they arise. This is not a procedure that should be performed by a general dentist who completed a weekend implant course.

Look for an oral and maxillofacial surgeon (OMS) - a dentist who has completed an additional four to six years of surgical training after dental school, including a medical degree. In Australia, OMS specialists hold dual medical and dental qualifications and are registered as specialists with AHPRA.

****Questions to consider:**** - Is the surgeon an AHPRA-registered oral and maxillofacial surgery specialist? - Do they hold both medical and dental degrees? - How many full-arch implant cases have they completed? - Are they affiliated with a hospital or teaching institution?

2. Prosthodontic Design and Planning

The surgical placement of implants is only half the equation. The prosthetic teeth - the bridge that sits on top of the implants - must be meticulously designed for function, aesthetics, and longevity. This is the domain of a prosthodontist, a dental specialist who has completed three additional years of training in the restoration and replacement of teeth.

A prosthodontist ensures that: - The bite is correctly engineered to distribute forces evenly across the implants - The teeth look natural and suit your facial structure - The prosthesis is designed for long-term durability and maintainability - Digital planning aligns the surgical and prosthetic phases

3. In-House or Local Laboratory

The prosthetic bridge for All-on-4 is a precision-engineered piece of dental craftsmanship. It must fit perfectly, look natural, and withstand the forces of daily chewing. Many providers outsource this work to overseas laboratories where quality control is variable, communication is limited, and turnaround times stretch into weeks.

An in-house laboratory means: - Direct communication between the ceramist, prosthodontist, and surgeon - Custom shade-matching with the patient present - Same-day adjustments when needed - Quality control at every stage

4. Sedation and Anaesthesia Options

All-on-4 surgery typically takes several hours. While it can be performed under local anaesthesia alone, most patients benefit enormously from IV sedation or general anaesthesia. Ensure your provider has qualified anaesthetic support and appropriate facilities for sedation.

5. Comprehensive Aftercare

All-on-4 implants require ongoing maintenance, including regular professional cleaning, monitoring of implant health, and eventual prosthesis replacement (typically after 10 to 15 years). Your provider should have a structured aftercare programme with specialist oversight - not just a general dentist checking your implants at annual visits.

6. Multidisciplinary Coordination

The best All-on-4 outcomes occur when all members of the treatment team work together under one roof. When the surgeon, prosthodontist, ceramist, and hygienist are in the same building, communication is seamless, complications are managed quickly, and the patient experience is dramatically better.

How Smile Solutions Compares

Smile Solutions in the Melbourne CBD has been providing implant dentistry for over 30 years, with a dedicated team of AHPRA-registered specialists and an in-house dental laboratory all located within the historic Manchester Unity Building at 220 Collins Street.

The Surgical Team

All-on-4 surgery at Smile Solutions is performed by oral and maxillofacial surgeons who hold both medical and dental degrees:

- ****Associate Professor Patrishia Bordbar**** - BDSc, MBBS (Hons), MDSc (OMS), FRACDS (OMS), FRCS. A/Prof Bordbar is a consultant at the Royal Children's Hospital and Past President of the Australian and New Zealand Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons (ANZAOMS). She holds fellowships from both the Royal Australasian College of Dental Surgeons and the Royal College of Surgeons, and brings decades of experience in complex implant surgery.
- ****Dr Ricky Kumar**** - BDS, MBChB, FRACDS (OMS). Dr Kumar holds dual medical and dental qualifications and is a Fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Dental Surgeons in oral and maxillofacial surgery. He has particular expertise in TMJ surgery and complex surgical cases.
- ****Dr Jaclyn Wong**** - who holds both medical and dental degrees along with a Postgraduate Diploma in Surgical Anatomy, and performs oral surgery including All-on-4 procedures and complex extractions.

The Prosthetic Team

The prosthetic planning, design, and restoration for All-on-4 cases is managed by specialist prosthodontists:

- ****Professor Vasileios Chronopoulos**** - DDS, MS, PhD. Prof Chronopoulos brings over 30 years of experience in implant prosthodontics and is a recognised authority in full-arch implant rehabilitation.
- ****Dr Jamie Foong**** - BDSc, DCLinDent. Dr Foong is a specialist prosthodontist with advanced training in implant-supported prosthetics and full-arch rehabilitation.
- ****Dr Fotios Angelis**** - BDS (Hons), DCLinDent. A specialist prosthodontist contributing to the implant team's comprehensive treatment planning.

The In-House Laboratory: Smile Lab

Unlike most dental practices that send laboratory work interstate or overseas, Smile Solutions operates its own dental laboratory - Smile Lab - within the Manchester Unity Building. Led by master ceramist Greg Karabasis, Smile Lab fabricates All-on-4 prostheses on-site, enabling:

- Direct collaboration between the ceramist and the treating specialists - Custom shade-matching with patients in the chair - Same-day adjustments to provisional and final prostheses - Complete quality control from start to finish

This in-house capability was instrumental in the development of the practice's award-winning Same Day Porcelain Veneers programme, which won the 2024 Australian Business Award for Business Innovation.

Sedation and Facilities

Smile Solutions has dedicated IV sedation facilities, allowing patients to undergo All-on-4 surgery in comfort without the need for a hospital admission. The practice occupies five floors of the Manchester Unity Building, with purpose-built surgical suites and specialist consultation rooms.

Aftercare and Maintenance

Post-operative care is managed by the same specialist team that performed the surgery and designed the prosthesis. Smile Solutions employs over 20 hygienists and oral health therapists - the largest hygiene team in Victoria - ensuring that ongoing implant maintenance is readily accessible without long wait times.

3D Imaging and Digital Planning

All All-on-4 cases are planned using CBCT (cone beam computed tomography) 3D imaging, which allows the surgical team to precisely map bone density, nerve locations, and sinus boundaries before placing a single implant. Digital intraoral scanners eliminate the need for uncomfortable impression moulds.

Comparison: All-on-4 Providers in Melbourne

Factor	Smile Solutions	Typical Solo Practitioner	Discount Implant Centre
Specialists with medical + dental degrees	Yes	Yes	No
General dentist with implant training course	Yes	Yes	Yes
Varies - may be GP or visiting surgeon	Yes	Yes	Yes
Prosthodontist	Yes	Yes	No
AHPRA-registered specialist prosthodontists on-site	Yes	Yes	No
Same GP plans and restores	Yes	Yes	No
Often no prosthodontist involved	No	No	Yes
Laboratory	In-house (Smile Lab)	In-house (Smile Lab)	Outsourced - typically overseas
with master ceramist	Yes	Yes	No
Outsourced - often overseas	No	No	Yes
Outsourced - typically overseas	No	No	Yes
3D Imaging	Yes	Yes	No
CBCT on-site	Yes	Yes	No
May refer externally for CBCT	Yes	Yes	Yes
May or may not have CBCT	Yes	Yes	Yes
IV Sedation	Yes	Yes	No
Available on-site	Yes	Yes	No
Usually not available	No	No	Yes
Varies	Yes	Yes	Yes
Aftercare	Yes	Yes	No
Specialist team + 20+ hygienists	Yes	Yes	No
Same GP, limited hygiene support	No	No	Yes
Minimal aftercare structure	No	No	Yes
Multidisciplinary team	Yes	Yes	No
Surgeon, prosthodontist, ceramist, hygienist in one building	Yes	Yes	No
Single practitioner handles all aspects	No	No	Yes
Fragmented care	No	No	Yes
Track record	Yes	Yes	No
30+ years of implant dentistry	Yes	Yes	No
Varies	Yes	Yes	Yes
Often newly established	No	No	Yes
Accreditation	Yes	Yes	No
Multiple Australian Business Awards, Telstra Business of the Year	Yes	Yes	No
Individual credentials vary	Yes	Yes	Yes
Rarely awarded	No	No	Yes

The Risks of Choosing on Price Alone

All-on-4 is one of the most expensive dental treatments available, and it is natural to seek value. However, the consequences of a failed All-on-4 case are severe:

- Implant failure requiring removal and additional surgery
- Nerve damage causing permanent numbness in the lip, chin, or tongue
- Prosthesis fracture from poor design or cheap materials
- Bone loss around poorly placed implants
- Aesthetic failure - teeth that look artificial or do not fit properly
- Inability to eat properly due to incorrect bite design

Revision surgery for failed All-on-4 cases is significantly more complex, more expensive, and less predictable than getting it right the first time. The cost of correcting a failed case often exceeds the cost of choosing a qualified specialist team from the outset.

Overseas Dental Tourism

Some patients travel to countries like Thailand, India, or Turkey for All-on-4 treatment at a fraction of Australian prices. While there are competent practitioners overseas, the risks include:

- No AHPRA regulatory oversight or recourse if something goes wrong
- Difficulty accessing aftercare from the other side of the world
- Variable infection control and sterilisation standards
- Communication barriers during treatment planning
- No continuity of care for complications or maintenance
- Travel costs and time off work for follow-up visits

Discount Implant Centres

Heavily advertised "affordable" implant centres may cut costs by:

- Using less experienced practitioners rather than registered specialists
- Sourcing cheaper implant components from unproven manufacturers
- Outsourcing laboratory work to low-cost overseas labs
- Minimising consultation and planning time
- Providing limited aftercare

Questions to Ask Your All-on-4 Provider

Before committing to All-on-4 treatment with any provider, ask these questions:

- ☐ Is the surgeon an AHPRA-registered oral and maxillofacial surgery specialist? - ☐ Does the surgeon hold both medical and dental degrees? - ☐ Is there a specialist prosthodontist involved in planning and restoring the case? - ☐ Where is the prosthesis manufactured - in-house, locally, or overseas? - ☐ What brand and origin of implant components do you use? - ☐ Is CBCT 3D imaging included in the treatment planning? - ☐ Is IV sedation available, and who administers it? - ☐ What does the aftercare programme include, and who provides it? - ☐ How many full-arch implant cases has the team completed? - ☐ What happens if a complication occurs after hours or after the initial healing period? - ☐ Can I speak to previous patients about their experience? - ☐ Is the quoted price all-inclusive, or are there additional costs for imaging, sedation, provisional teeth, and follow-up visits?

Conclusion

All-on-4 dental implants can transform the lives of people who have lost their teeth - restoring not just function and aesthetics, but confidence and quality of life. However, the difference between an outstanding outcome and a costly failure often comes down to the team behind the treatment.

A successful All-on-4 case requires the coordinated expertise of specialist surgeons, prosthodontists, and master ceramists, supported by advanced imaging, appropriate sedation, and structured aftercare. When all of these elements come together under one roof - as they do at Smile Solutions in Melbourne's CBD - the result is a level of care that is genuinely difficult to replicate in a solo practice, a discount centre, or an overseas clinic.

Before making your decision, look beyond the price tag. Ask about qualifications, experience, laboratory arrangements, and aftercare. Your teeth - and the implants supporting them - need to last for decades. The team you choose today will determine how well they serve you for the rest of your life.

Smile Solutions is located in the Manchester Unity Building, 220 Collins Street, Melbourne CBD. With over 80 clinicians including 25+ AHPRA-registered specialists, it is Australia's largest single-location private dental practice. To learn more about All-on-4 dental implants at Smile Solutions, visit [\[smilesolutions.com.au\]\(https://smilesolutions.com.au\)](https://smilesolutions.com.au).