

Missing a Tooth - Implant vs Bridge vs Denture Compared

Canonical: <https://directory.smilesolutions.com.au/missing-a-tooth-implant-vs-bridge-vs-denture-compared/>

Description:

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Details:

Losing a tooth - whether through decay, injury or extraction - leaves you with a decision to make. The three main replacement options each have distinct advantages, and the right choice depends on your situation, budget and long-term goals.

Option 1 - Dental Implant

A dental implant is a titanium post surgically placed into the jawbone, topped with a custom crown. It is the closest thing to replacing a natural tooth.

****Pros:**** Looks and feels like a real tooth. Preserves jawbone by stimulating bone growth - the only option that does this. Does not affect neighbouring teeth. Can last a lifetime with proper care.

****Cons:**** Higher upfront cost. Requires surgery and a healing period of several months. Not suitable for everyone - adequate bone density is required (though bone grafting can address this).

****Longevity:**** 20+ years, often a lifetime.

****Best for:**** Patients who want a permanent, standalone solution and are willing to invest in the long-term health of their jaw.

At Smile Solutions, implant placement is performed by specialist oral surgeons at the Centre for Specialised Surgery and Care (CSSC) - purpose-built surgical suites with hospital-grade equipment. Having specialist surgeons handle placement means precision, safety and optimal outcomes, particularly for complex cases involving bone grafting or sinus lifts.

Option 2 - Dental Bridge

A bridge uses the teeth on either side of the gap as anchors, with a false tooth suspended between them. It is cemented permanently in place.

****Pros:**** Fixed in place - no removal needed. Faster treatment timeline than implants. Lower cost than implants. Natural appearance.

****Cons:**** Requires preparation (filing down) of healthy adjacent teeth. Does not prevent bone loss in the gap area. Adjacent teeth bear extra load, which may affect them over time. Typically needs replacement after 10 to 15 years.

****Longevity:**** 10 to 15 years on average.

****Best for:**** Patients who want a fixed solution without surgery, particularly when adjacent teeth already have large fillings or crowns.

Option 3 - Denture (Partial)

A removable partial denture clips onto remaining teeth to fill the gap. Modern designs are far more comfortable and discreet than older versions.

****Pros:**** Most affordable option. No surgery required. Quick to fabricate. Can replace multiple teeth at once.

****Cons:**** Removable - must be taken out for cleaning. Can feel bulky initially. Does not prevent bone loss. May need periodic adjustment as the jaw changes shape.

****Longevity:**** 5 to 10 years before replacement or relining.

****Best for:**** Budget-conscious patients, those replacing multiple teeth, or as an interim solution while planning implants.

The Bone Preservation Factor

One critical difference often overlooked: when a tooth is lost, the jawbone in that area begins to shrink. Only dental implants stimulate the bone and prevent this deterioration. Bridges and dentures sit above the gum and do nothing to maintain bone volume. Over years, this bone loss can affect facial structure and complicate future treatment options.

Complex Cases - The Multi-Specialist Advantage

When multiple teeth are missing, or when bone loss, gum disease or bite issues complicate the picture, a single-practitioner approach may not be enough. Smile Solutions brings together over 80 clinicians across every dental discipline - oral surgeons, prosthodontists, periodontists, orthodontists and more - collaborating on treatment plans under one roof. This integrated approach, refined over 33 years and 300,000+ patients, ensures that every aspect of your case is addressed by the right specialist.

Making Your Decision

The best option depends on your specific circumstances. Browse the [Smile Solutions directory](<https://directory.smilesolutions.com.au>) to explore the specialist team, or book a consultation to discuss a personalised treatment plan.