

Ask The Dentists- July 2012

Dear Dr. Winter, I am in the process of having partial dentures made with clasp attachments, which are metal, ugly and have hurt my teeth in the past. I am most interested in seeing if I can use "mini-implants" instead of clasps to retain my partials. My current dentist doesn't do any implants (standard or mini) and has indicated that the partials can't be retained by mini implants. He says that the only way mini implants can be used is with a full denture. Based upon what I have read and seen on your website I disagree. Please help me figure this out. Thanks!! Bob

Dear Bob, mini-implants have been approved for continuing and long-term use to retain dentures and while using mini-implants for stabilization of a partial is a rather new development in dentistry; many dentists throughout the country have used it with great success. It is not a "perfect solution," however; it is something that can work in the right patient, under the right circumstances. A dentist's first choice will usually be to place standard diameter implants to preserve remaining bone and more adequately withstand biting forces. So partial dentures are a compromise as they sit on remaining bone and can rub and accelerate bone loss. Placing implants or mini-implants can help stop this rubbing and can help preserve remaining bone. Traditional implants can allow you to throw away your partial altogether and give you the ability to place crowns or bridges that can increase your chewing ability without worry that clasps may loosen or break the teeth they are clasped to.

Your dentist may be more conservative and afraid that you will be upset if a mini-implant fails. He is not wrong for these concerns but other dentists may be more open to trying things that will make you happy if there is sufficient bone height and quality to place these small diameter implants. It is important to realize that a minimum of 10mm of bone height is necessary to place these mini-implants. After many years of being without teeth, your sinuses may expand leaving you with inadequate bone for placement of mini-implants without sinus augmentation procedures. I do not believe that mini-implants should be placed to retain partials in sinus-grafted-bone, as that bone is not of sufficient density to provide for long term, predictable mini-implant success.

We invite our readers to call us at 414-464-9021 and come in for a comprehensive examination and x-ray visit so we can answer your questions about implants, mini-implants or ill-fitting partial dentures.

You may see examples of our dentistry at [www.winterdental.com](http://www.winterdental.com)  
If you would like to read Dr. Winter's published articles please type in  
Username: visitor and Password: smile to access these articles and read  
about Dr. Winter's treatment options.

We look forward to meeting you!

Sincerely,

Dr. Richard Winter MAGD, DICOI

Master Academy of General Dentistry

Diplomate International Congress of Oral Implantologists

Dr. Bruce Winter Board M.A.T.C.