

Ask The Dentists:

Dear Dr. Winter, I had my last 2 molars on the bottom left side of my mouth extracted 8 months ago and will be getting my final implants in another month. In the meantime, the top two opposing teeth have moved down in the sockets a little bit and when I press up on them with my fingers it causes pain. I am worried that once the final implant teeth are installed it will be painful for me to eat on that side. Will the pain eventually subside once the top teeth get used to having pressure from the bottom teeth again?

Dear Debbie, it is not normal to have pain in your upper teeth. You could have periodontal disease, which can lead to loosening of your upper teeth. Periodontal disease as well having opposing teeth that are missing over long periods of time can lead to supereruption (dropping down) of the top teeth.

The problem with the teeth moving down is that you need a certain amount of space to place an implant, abutment and crown. The standard amount of space required is 7 mm. of height. You can ask your dentist if the tooth movement has created space problems in your situation. If you have pain in your upper teeth they need to be evaluated to make sure they are healthy enough to oppose implants. Implants have no ligament so there is no "give" when they hit opposing teeth. It is very important to make sure the opposing teeth are healthy. If they are not healthy they may require extraction and grafting and implant placement as well. Hopefully it's nothing serious and some good cleanings will make them feel better.

Dear Dr. Winter, I have a partial and I hate it! I keep getting food under it and it makes my teeth sore where the metal clips are placed. What can I do? Implants are real expensive and I am worried about just putting my partial in a drawer.

Dear Stephanie, most people stop wearing partial dentures for the same reasons you are unhappy with yours! If you don't wear your partial, you will experience tooth movement and your teeth can actually move all the way to the opposing arch and bite on the skin where the opposing tooth used to be! So please wear your partial until your dentist can review other options. Since partial denture clasps act like levers they do loosen your teeth over time. Dental implants can stabilize partials and implant bridges can take all the forces off of the clasped teeth. So sometimes we can place mini-implants or implants to hold partials in place and other times we can place implants and permanent teeth.

We invite our readers to come in for complimentary second opinions or comprehensive examination and x-ray visits. Please call us at 414-464-9021 to make your appointment today. You can go to www.winterdental.com to read Dr. Winter's articles and see photos and videos of our dentistry.

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