

Ask The Dentist June 2012

Dear Dr. Winter, my teeth are not in good shape. I have soft enamel that decays easily. Previous dental work is deteriorating, there is an odor coming from a back molar. I no longer want to continue to deal with never ending cavities and bad taste. I am interested in implant fixed dentures (probably mini implants due to cost).

Dear Jan, before you write off your remaining teeth, it is important to realize that strategic saving of teeth can help protect implants as teeth have ligaments which act as "shock absorbers" that implants lack. Many people feel that it is easier to extract all teeth and have implants and for some people that is the best course of action. However, if there are nice teeth that are healthy, it is not always prudent to remove them just to place implants as there are always risks, complications and implant failures to be taken in to account and while the percentage of implant success is very high, sometimes it is better to work around nice teeth then to remove them.

If your remaining teeth have periodontal disease and there is infection then it may be better to remove them and use dental implants to restore your lost teeth. Implants can be placed around the arch to support a screw- retained denture, a cement retained denture or a fixed bridge with porcelain teeth. Typically you would need a minimum of 6-9 implants to restore an upper arch. If you can't afford that number of implants a Snap-on-denture with fewer implants may be considered until the remaining implants can be placed. Dr. Winter has written articles on this called Upgradeable Dentistry that can be accessed from our website www.winterdental.com since some of the articles are password protected you may go to PUBLICATIONS and for username: type in "visitor" and for password type in "smile." Then you can read all the articles Dr. Richard Winter has published on these topics.

Also you mentioned mini-implants due to the cost involved. It is important to realize that mini-implants are the last choice for a full arch restoration as they are only used to retain full dentures. They are not substantial enough to support bridgework that would closely mimic having your own teeth. With mini-implants your teeth do need to be removed for 6-8 hours a day or you can develop a yeast infection so these are not a "fixed denture" as you requested.

We invite you and our other readers to call us at 414-464-9021 to schedule a comprehensive implant or cosmetic examination visit. Mention how you found us for a special consideration.

We look forward to meeting you,

Sincerely,
Richard Winter D.D.S. M.A.G.D. D.I.C.O.I.
Master Academy of General Dentistry
Diplomate International Congress of Oral Implantologists
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