

# Smiles Better

WITH DR. NUALA DEVLIN Causeway Dental Practice, Ballymoney



## What's the alternative?



Thank you for all the emails and enquiries from last month's implant article. Dental implants are a great way to replace missing teeth, but unfortunately they are not suitable for everyone.

So what's the alternative?

Partial dentures

Bridges

Full dentures

Partial dentures are great if you still have some remaining teeth, but partial dentures are not fixed in the mouth, they need to come out at night. The design and material of the denture depends on the number of teeth you have missing. An acrylic denture is the most common type of denture, and the cheapest. They are versatile and can be adjusted or added to easily, they can replace one tooth or all the teeth in the arch (full denture).

At first patients may find it difficult to speak when they first get their denture, this normally resolves in a few weeks when the tongue adjusts to the denture. Sometimes fixative is needed to hold the denture in place, I encourage all my patients to use it when they first get their denture as it can be quite daunting when you first go out in public places to eat or drink, the fixative gives you that extra security and added confidence!

If you have only a few teeth missing we can use clasps and rests on a Chrome denture to hold the denture in place. Chrome dentures are much thinner and don't have to cover as much of the gum, so when your eating you will still feel the food for example on the roof of your mouth, the hot or cold sensation and the texture. Chrome dentures are more expensive, but are much stronger

than acrylic dentures.

Bridges are a more complex treatment alternative to replace missing teeth. They require a good healthy mouth, strong teeth and bone to support the missing teeth. Bridges are also known as a fixed partial denture, they are used to replace a missing tooth by joining permanently to neighbouring teeth or implants.

There are many different ways to bridge teeth, most will involve removing tooth tissue of the neighbouring teeth so that metal or ceramic can be bonded to the them to support the 'fake' missing tooth. If the neighbouring teeth are healthy and have no restorations or fillings then we try to design the bridge so that that just enough tooth tissue is removed to support the missing tooth. On the other hand if the neighbouring teeth have large fillings or have had root canal treatment then a bridge can be designed improve the aesthetics of the these teeth and replace the missing teeth.



As bridges are fixed to teeth it means that your cleaning technique needs to be more meticulous! Flossing eg superfloss and interdental brushes need to be used everyday and 6 monthly hygiene visits are recommended.

There are many different solutions to filling that missing gap, each comes with many advantages and disadvantages and each one will apply differently to individual patients. I hope you have found this article helpful, if you have any questions or queries please email me at: [nuala@causewaydental.com](mailto:nuala@causewaydental.com)

Happy 1st Anniversary to Gillian and all the team from myself and the team at Causeway Dental!