



The Ultimate Guide to Zirconia Dental Implants

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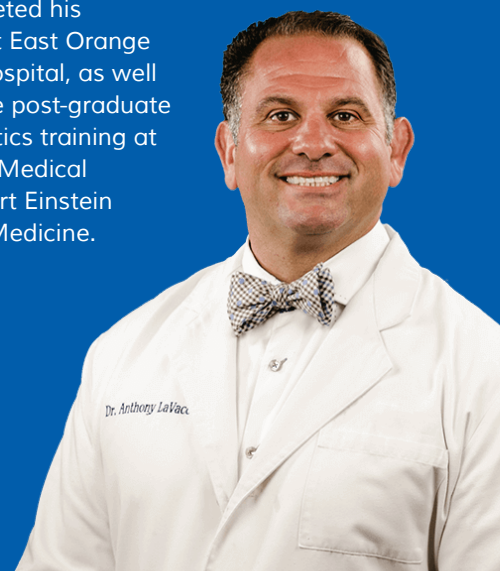
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Dental implants are the best way to replace missing teeth. Since they integrate into the jawbone, they're permanent, strong and prevent facial collapse. When combined with replacement teeth, dental implants truly restore the function and appearance of your smile. Yet, for years, titanium was the material of choice for dental implants and a lot of people have concerns about metal, including worries about allergic reactions and chemical leaching.

At Naperville Dental Specialists, I offer a holistic, metal-free alternative: zirconia dental implants. I want our patients to be able to enjoy the benefits of dental implants with a material they feel completely comfortable with. Ready to learn more about this healthy, holistic implant option? I'm answering the questions we hear most often at our practice in order to help you make an informed decision about restoring your smile.

ABOUT DR. ANTHONY LAVACCA, DMD, MS, FACP, FICOI

Dr. Anthony LaVacca is a board-certified prosthodontist who has carved out a place as a leader in implant dentistry. He's given lectures nationally and internationally on a variety of dental implant topics. Dr. LaVacca earned his Doctor of Dental Medicine degree from Temple University. He then completed his residency at East Orange Veterans Hospital, as well as extensive post-graduate prosthodontics training at Montefiore Medical Center/Albert Einstein College of Medicine.



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What are Zirconia Dental Implants?

A dental implant, regardless of type, functions like the tooth's root and serves as an anchor for a crown or permanent dentures. We can use dental implants to replace one or more missing teeth. For a single tooth, the alternative is a dental bridge. However, this requires modifying the surrounding teeth to support the bridge even if they're healthy. With a bridge, you'll still experience bone shrinkage where the tooth is missing, which can eventually lead to facial sagging.

If you're missing all of the teeth in an arch, dental implants are superior to removable dentures. Removable dentures often look unnatural, lead to embarrassing slippage, feel uncomfortable and will result in bone loss and facial collapse. Instead, we can place zirconia dental implants and use them to secure permanent dentures that look and feel like natural teeth. In addition to giving you stable, fully functional replacement teeth, dental implants encourage bone growth, preserving your jaw health and creating a more youthful appearance.

Zirconia dental implants, sometimes referred to as ceramic dental implants or zirconia dental implants, are similar to titanium implants in the purpose they serve. However, instead of being made with metal, they're crafted from an extremely strong, durable, white, ceramic material. They're a much more aesthetic option and they're metal-free and holistic, giving patients peace of mind. While titanium implants are a good choice for some people, there are a number of advantages to zirconia implants.




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Why Choose Zirconia Dental Implants?

Zirconia dental implants don't contain any metal and have a variety of health benefits, as well as a more natural appearance. Here are some key reasons to choose zirconia implants:

- **Improved Biocompatibility and Osseointegration**

Zirconia is more biocompatible than titanium. This leads to better osseointegration, which is the technical way of saying that the implant fuses completely with the bone. It won't elicit a response from your immune system and your body is less likely to reject a zirconia implant as a foreign object than it is a titanium implant, reducing the risk of implant failure. Research has shown the bone and gum tissue heal and regenerate more effectively with zirconia implants and there's less inflammation and gum recession. You'll get the most stable anchor possible with a shorter healing time.

- **Aesthetically Pleasing**

Zirconia implants are white and close to the color of your teeth. With titanium implants, if you have thin gum tissue, you may see a gray shadow at the gum line. Additionally, if your gums recede, the metal will be visible, which can be unsightly. This can be a big concern, especially when it comes to the front teeth. Zirconia blends in with your replacement teeth and looks more attractive and natural. When combined with porcelain crowns or crowns that fuse porcelain and zirconia as a base, light will pass through, mimicking the transparency of natural teeth. Since metal blocks the light, you can't achieve the same effect with titanium implants.

- **Less Chemical Leaching and No Corrosion**

With titanium, things like spit and fluoride interact with the metal and, over time, the chemical reactions can cause the metal to corrode. It can then migrate into nearby tissue or, in some cases, even the lymph nodes. Zirconia is an inert material, doesn't stimulate chemical reactions or corrode and shows minimal ion release. You won't have to worry about potential chemical leaching, making it a healthier option.

- **No Allergies or Sensitivities**

A small percentage of people are allergic to titanium and, occasionally, the allergy doesn't show up until years after the implant is placed. Zirconia implants are biocompatible and don't produce allergic reactions or sensitivity, both of which can lead to implant failure and feeling unwell.

- **Zero Metallic Taste or Galvanization**

Some other concerns associated with metal are a metallic taste and galvanization. As zirconia implants are metal-free, neither will be an issue.

- **Non-Conductive**

Zirconia doesn't conduct electrical energy or thermal currents like metal does. This means you won't experience discomfort when eating hot or cold food like you can with titanium implants. Improved comfort is always a good thing!

- **Resists Plaque**

Zirconia has a much lower plaque affinity than metal. Our holistic implants actually resist plaque, which helps to ward off swelling after the procedure and gum disease in the long-term.

- **Holistic**

Because of zirconia's biocompatibility, the implants work with your body and promote overall well-being.

- **Faster Healing**

The biocompatible, plaque-resistant material creates an optimal soft tissue and bone response. Healing time is reduced and so is post-procedure pain and swelling.

- **Exceptionally Strong and Durable**

Zirconia is remarkably durable and it can withstand strong forces without fracturing or cracking, making it ideal for both front and back teeth.

What Happens During the Zirconia Implant Procedure?

1

When you come in for your consultation, I perform an oral exam, talk with you about your needs and goals and take your medical history. At Naperville Dental Specialists, we use the most cutting-edge diagnostic tools, including i-CAT™ to take three-dimensional radiographs and iTero® and TRIOS® digital scanners, which create a three-dimensional model of your mouth directly on my computer screen. I'm able to see where your nerves and sinuses are located and assess your bone and tooth structure. This is key and it's essential to go to an implant dentist who uses the latest technology and invests significant time in the treatment planning stage in order to ensure the procedure is safe. This will reduce the chance of implant failure and other complications during the healing process.

2

Once I determine you're an ideal candidate for zirconia implants, I use our TRIOS® CAD/CAM software to create a precise surgical guide for your procedure. I can determine exactly where to place implants and at what depth. This computerized treatment planning means reduced chair time, faster healing and, in some cases, immediate loading of dental implants.

3

On the day of your surgery, I'll numb the area, make an incision in your gum tissue and place the zirconia root form in your jawbone. Depending on whether or not you need bone grafting and how many teeth we're replacing, the surgery can take between 30 minutes to several hours. While many practices rely on a third-party lab, we have an in-office dental lab, so, many times, we can attach a temporary replacement tooth to the implant for you to wear during the healing process. When we're done placing your implant, we'll use our iTero or TRIOS scanner to take a digital scan, which we'll use to fabricate your permanent replacement tooth or teeth.

4

While we offer procedures like Teeth-in-a-Day® and All-on-4®, which give you the opportunity to complete the process in a single procedure, for standard zirconia implants, it takes between two and six months for the jawbone to fuse with the implant. When healing is complete, we'll attach your crown or permanent dentures to your implant or implants. You'll have a brand new smile and the ability to chew and speak with confidence.



What is the Recovery Process Like?

There is very little downtime after a zirconia dental implant procedure and most patients can return to work within a day or two. Since the material is more biocompatible than titanium, you'll experience less discomfort and swelling. If you do have a bit of soreness and swelling, it can usually be managed with an over-the-counter pain reliever. You can also hold an ice pack on your face in the implant area for 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off throughout the first 24 hours. If you're prescribed pain medication, be sure to use it as directed. Oral hygiene is crucial for your healing. You'll receive aftercare instructions that you'll want to follow closely and when you get the okay, make brushing and flossing a priority.

Who is a Candidate for Zirconia Dental Implants?

The good news is, anyone who is a candidate for titanium dental implants is a candidate for zirconia dental implants. Generally, patients with adequate bone density, healthy gum tissue and a commitment to oral health whose jaws are done growing will get the best result from dental implants. However, even if you have experienced bone loss, bone grafting and All-on-4 can make dental implants a possibility for you.

What Results Can I Expect With Zirconia Implants?

Your results will be lifelike, natural and stunning and you'll regain the full function of your teeth. Here are a few before and after images of real patients to give you a better idea of what your new smile will look like with zirconia implants.



Thank You for Downloading *The Ultimate Guide to Zirconia Dental Implants!*

I hope this guide has been helpful and you have a better understanding of the benefits of zirconia implants, as well as what the procedure entails. If you have questions, concerns or you want to find out if they're the right choice for your smile needs, don't hesitate to reach out or book a free consultation at Naperville Dental Specialists!



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