

The Sarkissian Report

Dentistry News

Zirconia Metal-Free Impants

Over the years, many health conscious patients, who prefer to avoid metals implanted into their bodies, had been asking for a metal-free solution. Regardless of the abundance of titanium implants, the prevailing question has been, "why not ceramic implants?" In fact, hip prostheses of pure zirconium dioxide, or Zirconia, have been available in Switzerland for more than a decade. One Swiss company who manufactured ceramic hip implants, Z-Systems, ventured into producing metal-free implants and finally, about a decade ago, the FDA approved Zirconia Dental Implants for use in the United States.



The prevailing trend in medicine and dentistry is moving away from metals in general.

So far some dentists, including Dr. Sarkissian, have embraced this new material and have had a lot of success. There are certainly many advantages to having a metal-free inert substance implanted inside your bones, rather than a metal.

Interesting Dietary Facts

What doesn't taste better with butter? Butter is a wonderful source of the fat-soluble vitamins A, D and K. These are needed for many functions in the body including proper growth, immune system support, bone health and protein and calcium assimilation. Butter is especially important for our growing children. Such items as margarine and processed or hydrolysed fats are not good for us!



Dr. Joseph Sarkissian

According to Dr. Price, Fermented Cod Liver Oil taken with high vitamin butter oil are complementary foods and were known to be sacred foods by traditional cultures as they were reserved for women and men (before conceiving), during pregnancy, lactation, and for children.

Xylitol

Xylitol is a sugar substitute that is found in many over-the-counter products. It doesn't act on the teeth directly, although some studies show it attracts calcium. Xylitol acts directly on bacteria. Because it's a polyol, it isn't metabolized by trouble-causing bacteria. The xylitol is taken up by the bacteria, but cannot process it as they would regular sugar. They stop producing acids that are the precursor to cavities, and which shifts the environment to favor bacteria that don't cause enamel breakdown. The germs eventually die, and the niche is filled with healthy bacteria.

We recommend using a special xylitol gel for all infants and children, and for adults who are at risk for cavities or dry mouth. Every other day, after brushing, apply the gel over all the teeth, rub it in, and floss with it still inside the mouth.

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Frequently Asked Questions

Is Zirconia a metal?

Zirconia is short for Zirconium dioxide, which is a ceramic. Zirconium is a metal but its oxide is a ceramic, just like Aluminum oxide. Similarly, Calcium is a highly reactive metal but its compound, calcium phosphate, is what makes up most of the solid part of our bones.

Do Zirconia implants integrate with bone as well as titanium implants?

The process of bone growing along the surface of implants is called "osseointegration". Studies so far show that Zirconia binds with bone at least as good as titanium, if not better.



Are Zirconia implants suitable for everyone?

Certainly not. Smokers, diabetics and those with bleeding disorders are definitely not candidates. Other factors that increase the risk for implant failure are insufficient bone density or depth, a collapsed bite with insufficient clearance, uncontrolled gum disease, and those who do not fully cooperate in wearing the protective appliances during the healing phase.

Don't ceramic implants break?

That statement is so outdated that it has become an urban legend still used by dentists who are not abreast of new developments. The very first ceramic implants 30 years ago were prone to breaking. Since then, a new system of zirconia manufacturing process, called hot isostatic processing, (HIP), produces implants that simply do not break, if proper protocols are followed. The case to the right has survived beautifully since Dr. Sarkissian placed it in his clinic six years ago.

Advantages

These are the main advantages of Zirconia implants over their titanium counterparts

1. Superior esthetics



A front tooth restored by a zirconia implant. If it were titanium, the grey metal would eventually shine through the gums.

2. Less plaque retention.

3. Superior soft tissue and gum reaction to the implant, comparable to natural teeth.

4. No electrical conductivity, therefore no galvanic currents - the battery effect typical of all metallic fillings, crowns or implants.

5. Not influenced by electromagnetic radiation.

6. No metal corrosion or release of metallic ions and compounds into the surrounding tissues

7. No inflammation response as is typical with many metals including titanium.



Six years without a problem



1. A failing root canal tooth



2. The tooth has been extracted



3. A Zirconia full ceramic implant



4. The final crown three month later