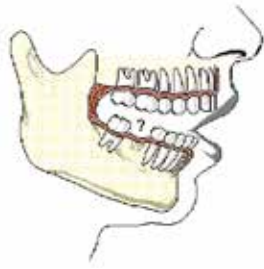
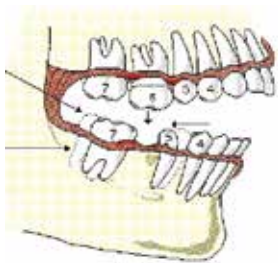


Why It Is Important To Replace Missing Teeth



What happens when a tooth is lost?

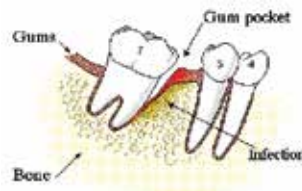
Teeth can last for life, but the long term consequences of missing teeth can jeopardize this. When a tooth is lost it upsets the harmony of the bite. The teeth contacting the missing tooth begin to move. The tooth above will drift downwards. The two teeth either side will begin to tilt.



Now that these teeth have moved long term problems begin to develop. The biting forces once borne by these teeth are transferred to other teeth. Overloading of teeth occurs resulting in their breakdown. Gum and decay problems develop which can be difficult to treat.

As the tooth tips, cleaning becomes difficult. Gum infections establish destroying tooth support. Eventually, the tooth becomes loose and can be lost.

When tooth support is lost, the gum recedes, exposing the root surface.



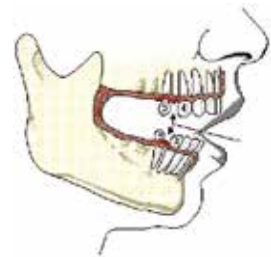
In the diagram below, the arrow shows how lower tooth number 7 has lost its bony support.



The root surface does not have the hard enamel layer to protect it. Decay can develop quite quickly and be difficult to treat. If the decay goes below the gum level the tooth may not be able to be restored. Root caries proceeds very rapidly. Within a short time the decay may have reached the nerve, resulting in a painful abscess and tooth loss. More teeth are lost and the process continues.

Teeth can last for life, but the long term consequences of missing teeth can jeopardise this.

Now the patient must chew on their front teeth. Front teeth are not designed for chewing and cannot tolerate these forces. They become overloaded and begin to breakdown. Evident by tooth fracture, frequent restoration failure, excessive wear and chipping of teeth. Replacement of missing back teeth can prevent these problems.



Back teeth can be replaced in several ways. Dentures, bridges or implants can be used to replace these teeth. Discuss this with your dentist to see which is the best option for you.