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Dental Implant Timeline

Dental Implants are a wonderful solution to missing teeth. Obtaining dental implants requires a significant time commitment in terms of the number of appointments and the duration of the process from start to finish. Below is a guideline for what you can expect. As an athlete should not return from an injury too early, we feel that allowing proper healing time is critical for long term success. Please remember that a dental implant is ONLY the portion placed in the bone by Dr. Cataldo. The tooth or “crown” is then attached to the dental implant by your dentist and will incur separate fees.

1. **Tooth removal:** If teeth need to be removed, often 2 months are required to allow the bone to heal before a Dental Implant can be placed. Occasionally, Dental Implants can be placed at the time of tooth removal, and Dr. Cataldo can help you determine if this is advisable.
2. **Bone Augmentation:** If the quantity of bone at a particular site is insufficient for Dental Implant placement, procedures can be done to augment this bone. Often 6-8 months are required for proper healing of these procedures before the dental implant can be placed.
3. **Dental Implant:** When placed, it is usually “buried” or “submerged” beneath the gum tissue. After the first week of soft tissue healing, you should be virtually unaware that it is there. The implant should then be allowed to heal within the bone for 3-4 months. You’ll be seen at one week to check soft tissue healing, and again at six weeks to check bone healing. Often a removable interim prosthesis or “flipper” which replaces the missing teeth is required to protect the area and prevent the teeth from “shifting.”
4. **Exposure:** After 3-4 months of healing, a minor surgical procedure taking only few minutes is required to “expose” the head of the implant so the tooth can be fitted to it. A special “healing cap” that will protrude slightly through the gum tissue is placed at this time and you should make an appointment to see your dentist, and begin the tooth fabrication process 2 weeks later to allow for proper soft tissue healing.

A dental implant and the associated procedures can require from 5 to 12 months healing time depending on your particular situation. Allowing proper healing time will maximize the long term health of your implant.