

# Dental Implants

A benefits choice for your company.



Dental implants have become the standard of care for tooth replacement, as opposed to fixed or removable partial dentures. Implants can be a better, long-term choice for patients, as they may result in fewer dental procedures over time.

Delta Dental of Virginia offers the option of covering implants for your employees if you choose. The following will help you make an informed decision as to whether adding dental implant coverage is the best option for your company.

## What is an implant?

An implant is a titanium prosthesis that acts like a tooth root to replace a tooth or act as a bridge abutment. Implants can be used to replace single or multiple teeth.

## Benefits of using an implant versus a bridge?

Implants do not affect any teeth surrounding a missing tooth. The implant can be used completely on its own, leaving adjacent teeth untouched. The use of a fixed bridge to replace missing teeth requires adjacent teeth to be ground down and used as support for the bridge. The greatest benefit of using an implant is the healthy teeth adjacent to it are not compromised.

Studies show that failure rates of teeth that have been ground down to support a bridge increase, leading to higher costs in later years. Implants are also easier to clean and floss than bridges because they have the same shape and contours as natural teeth so they do not trap food.

## Group Cost Protection

Your plan's annual maximum is a cost protection feature of your dental plan. In most cases, the cost of one three-unit bridge or dental implant will easily meet or exceed your annual maximum.

## For the Future

Dental implants are a viable solution to problems associated with missing teeth or periodontal disease. As you consider adding dental implants to your benefits coverage, know that Delta Dental of Virginia can support your decision through our state-of-the-art claims system. You also have the support of our customer service team, who are available to answer your employees' questions quickly and thoroughly. We can accommodate whatever decision is best for your organization.

*To learn more about adding dental implants to your group plan, or other benefits features available from Delta Dental, contact your account representative.*

## Cost Differential

Implants typically cost a bit more than the traditional three-unit bridge, but when paid through a dental insurance plan at a 50% co-insurance level with an annual maximum benefit, the incremental cost can be minimal. Future dental care costs must also be considered. Studies show that treatments such as root canal therapy on bridge abutment teeth, post and cores, as well as additional periodontal therapies are typically experienced with bridge placement. These types of procedures may increase future dental claims utilization.

## Dental Implant Comparison

### Initial cost\*:

Three-unit bridge.....	\$2,660
Single tooth implant .....	\$3,442

### Future costs associated with bridges\*:

Root canal (per tooth).....	\$862
Post and cores (each) .....	\$246
Periodontal therapies (each incident).....	\$100

**Claims impact\*\*:** Estimated.....0.5% - 2.5%

\*2007 national averages from Delta Dental submitted claims data

\*\*Delta Dental of Virginia underwriters estimation for overall dental claims cost