

Missing Teeth

Missing teeth is also known as 'hypodontia'. Some people will miss a single to or more than one tooth. Missing teeth are sometimes replaced with a dental implant or bridge, or otherwise the space is closed. People with missing teeth will sometimes also have small teeth, have late developing teeth, and have an impacted tooth as well and it is thought to be genetically linked.

? How is the treatment carried out?

Treatment usually involves wearing fixed braces and is usually carried out when most of the teeth have come through which for most patients is age twelve to fourteen years. The Orthodontist will advise whether it is possible to close the space or to reopen it and replace the missing tooth.

With the braces it is possible to:

- Straighten your teeth.
- Close gaps between your teeth.
- Create a space in the right place for replacement tooth.

* Small teeth

The width of other teeth may be smaller than usual and the upper lateral incisors in particular can be narrow and tapered in shape. They can be built up by the dentist with a tooth-coloured material that is shaped to make the tooth look cosmetically normal. Adults can have small teeth crowned or veneered.

* Impacted teeth

An impacted tooth is one that has failed to come through into the mouth. It may be stuck or has grown in the wrong direction. Read our additional leaflet on this topic.

* Genetics

Siblings with missing teeth should be examined as often they may also be missing a tooth.

* A dental implant

An implant is a special screw that is inserted into the bone. Later on the dentist can place a crown that attaches onto the implant to replace the missing tooth. They can only be placed from age 18 years onwards and are usually not provided under the NHS. A dental implant can cost around £2000 or more.

* A bridge

A bridge is a restoration that is made to replace a missing tooth by attaching onto adjacent teeth to that of the missing one. It can be made at a younger age than 18 but is not better as a long-term option as a dental implant. The dentist will provide a bridge under the NHS.

* Baby teeth

When a permanent tooth is missing the baby tooth will sometimes stay in its position and not fall out. In some cases it is best to leave the baby tooth in position whilst in other cases it is best to remove the baby tooth. It is not possible to predict if the baby tooth will remain in the long-term. The Orthodontist will advise you further regarding the baby tooth.

