



Edentulism — Adult Tooth Loss

There are treatment options to replace a missing tooth

What is Edentulism?

Edentulism is the condition of having no teeth. Newborn babies are considered edentulous since their teeth are hidden under their gums. Edentulism in adults refers to missing some permanent teeth (partially edentulous) or missing all teeth (completely edentulous). This can be a natural occurrence when someone is born without the tooth bud(s) necessary to develop permanent teeth, or teeth could be lost due to an accident, bone loss, gum disease, poor oral hygiene, or an underlying health condition.

Our teeth serve several important functions:

- **Digestion** - the mouth is the starting point of the digestive system, where food enters the mouth and is broken down by the teeth (mastication). A combination of saliva and smaller food pieces allow swallowing of the food to proceed to the digestive track.
- **Facial structure** - aside from flashing a smile full of teeth for social media, teeth help maintain the structure of the jawbone and length of the face. A sunken and hollow appearance of a face may be the result of having missing teeth.
- **Speech** - a collaboration of the teeth, tongue, and lips work together to enunciate words. Having missing teeth can impact pronunciation of words that involve the missing tooth.

Treatment Options for Edentulism (Missing Teeth)

Treatment options depend on the extent and number of missing teeth, the bone level, one's oral health, prognosis, and costs. The treatment alternatives, including crowns, bridges, implants, and dentures, are categorized under Major Restorative Services and Prosthodontic Services. A pre-estimate is recommended prior to starting treatment.

- **Complete edentulism:** missing all of the teeth on both lower and upper arch. Treatment options for complete edentulism include full upper and lower denture, upper and lower implant dentures, implant bridges, or full mouth implants.
- **Partial edentulism:** missing one or more teeth in the mouth. Treatment options for partial edentulism include removable partial denture, bridge, implant-bridge, or a single implant.



Symptoms of Potential Tooth Loss (Edentulism)

Early signs include:

- Loose tooth
- Gingiva (gum) recession
- Infection
- Bad breath
- Bad taste in the mouth
- Deep pockets of the gum

Edentulism can be prevented with good oral hygiene, healthy diet, and regular dental visits.



For more oral health information, please visit our website at www.bcbsfedental.com.



@bcbsfedental