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Replacing Missing Teeth Restores Confidence

Dental implants are the solution to missing teeth.

A simple Chinese food lunch turned into a disaster for Christopher Rasmussen when he bit into a spare rib and cracked one of his front teeth. The catastrophe occurred while he was still living and working in New York.



Christopher is all smiles on the job.

“This happened a short time before I moved to Florida,” relates Christopher. “My tooth cracked in half. I had to go to a hospital in The Bronx, where they removed the other half of the tooth.”

Christopher lived with an empty space in his mouth until he relocated south. In Florida, he found a comfortable place to live, a job he liked and a lifestyle he enjoyed.

“I was born in New Rochelle, New York, which is a suburb outside New York,” he states. “I moved to Florida from Westchester about a year ago. I’ve been an auto technician for more than ten years, and I’ve been with a local tire and auto repair shop for the last six months.”

He also found a dentist who offered him a lasting solution for his missing tooth.

After Christopher settled in Melbourne, his grandmother introduced him to Clark F. Brown, Jr., DDS, of Implant Dentistry of Florida, of whom she had been a patient for 20 years. Dr. Brown is a comprehensively trained and experienced dentist who has practiced cosmetic, general and implant

dentistry in Melbourne for more than 30 years. During the initial visit, Dr. Brown and his staff impressed Christopher.

“It was a very friendly atmosphere when I walked in,” he says. “Everyone greeted me enthusiastically. Dr. Brown came in with a big smile on his face and was very nice. I’m not a fan of dentists, but he put me at ease immediately. He spoke to me not in medical terms, but in layman’s terms, so I could understand what was going on. Everybody I dealt with was very nice.”

Dr. Brown explained that Christopher’s tooth was “dead,” and that’s why it so easily cracked. The dentist also noted that a second tooth right next to the one that had cracked was also dead and needed to be extracted and replaced. The teeth were on the top of his mouth toward the front in a very visible position.

“They’re the ones right next to my front teeth,” confirms Christopher. “Every time I smiled, I had a huge gap in my mouth. I was so embarrassed for a couple of months before I had gone to Dr. Brown.”

After his evaluation, Dr. Brown recommended dental implants to replace Christopher’s two missing teeth. The dentist also explained that Christopher would need bone grafting to build up sufficient bone mass to securely place the implants.

“First of all, he explained in depth why I couldn’t do a bridge,” remembers Christopher. “Secondly, he explained the seriousness of not having the bone to be able to place the implants. If he were to just do the procedure, the implants would fall out.

“He told me implants were the best solution and why. He’s a dentist, so I needed to accept his recommendation. When people bring their cars to me, I make recommendations to people as a mechanic. I tell them, *This is what you should do so eventually a bigger problem won’t occur.*”

Replacement options

Russell Martin’s father was a military man, and Russell spent part of his childhood overseas. Originally from New York, Russell’s family moved to Spain when he was young, and it was there that Russell was raised and educated. Another move brought his family back to the States, to Florida, where he’s lived for the past 25 years.

Russell has flourished in Florida. He has a career in construction and a thriving business.



Russell is impressed with the quality of his implants.

“I’m a home builder and also the owner/operator of a local design center,” he shares. “We do kitchens and baths, flooring and stone fabrication. We also build cabinetry and sell sinks and faucets. Basically, we’re a one-stop center.”

Like Christopher, Russell had some teeth that were failing, and he was searching for a dentist who could provide a lasting, quality solution. His fiancée and both of his parents are patients of Dr. Brown, and they recommended him.

“I had some bad teeth on my right side due to a couple of accidents,” describes Russell. “I had gotten into a motorcycle accident when I was sixteen and another accident when I was about twenty six. I just never got my teeth taken care of.

“My teeth were cracked and also had cavities in them. I wanted to find a dentist who was qualified and did quality work.

Russell also liked Dr. Brown from their first meeting. He was impressed by Dr. Brown’s knowledge and manner. Russell developed a trust in him right away.

“I thought Dr. Brown was a really nice guy,” he remarks. “He was confident. He knew what he was doing. He didn’t even have to say anything, I just knew it, and I liked that. I like someone who is confident.”

Russell’s failing teeth were located on the right side in the back. He notes that they occasionally caused him some discomfort, but they mostly caused him a problem when chewing.

“I had pain every now and then, because some of the fillings fell out,” notes Russell. “Those teeth were all filled at the same time and only lasted probably five to ten years. I had one of them capped, and the cap just broke off, so I wouldn’t smile.

“I had trouble chewing. I had to chew mostly on the left side of my mouth, and I avoided real

crunchy foods.”

As he did with Christopher, Dr. Brown performed a complete evaluation of Russell’s mouth and dental situation. When he was done, he presented Russell with a list of treatment choices for restoring his deteriorating teeth and reconstructing his smile.

“Dr. Brown is a straight shooter,” observes Russell. “He gave me options, which was good. I do the same in my business; I give people options. The options were dentures, a partial, a bridge or implants.

“I asked him his opinion. *Which will be best? Which is most cost effective?*” He basically gave me the rundown about what was high quality and will last me a long time. He told me the implants were the best choice.

“As a designer, builder and fabricator, I tell my clients the same thing. *This is my opinion, the better quality usually is going to last longer. You might have to invest a little more initially, but it saves you in the long run.*”

Russell illustrates that point by noting how one of the teeth that was replaced by a dental implant had been capped three times.

“I spent all that money three times, when I could have spent it just once on the implant.”

Patient support

People with failing or missing teeth sometimes have issues that might make them hesitant about choosing dental implants. Dr. Brown notes that both Russell and Christopher needed extra support during their treatment. He adds that this hesitation is not uncommon.



Christopher

“Often, patients are just interested in the front teeth because they want to be able to smile,” acknowledges Dr. Brown. “Of course, smiling is important, but the back teeth should not be ignored. The teeth in the front weren’t meant to chew. They’re meant to bite into food and move it to the back, where there are larger teeth that were designed to chew the food.

“When patients are missing teeth in the back, not only are they not chewing properly, they’re also putting more force on the teeth in the front, which can accelerate tooth loss in the front. So, having teeth in the back is important, and implants are the best way to get those teeth back.

“In Russell’s case, we placed two implants in the back of his mouth, and positioned the replacement teeth on top of them. That restored his chewing ability on the right side.”

Christopher faced a physical hurdle with his treatment. In his upper jaw, he lacked the bone mass

required to hold the implants in place.

“Many times, when teeth are removed, particularly on the top, there isn’t enough bone remaining to secure an implant,” explains Dr. Brown. “Either the bone is too thin or there’s not enough bone before you get to where the sinus is located.”

When this occurs, Dr. Brown can do a special type of bone grafting called a *sinus graft*. During a sinus graft, dentists enter the open space from inside the mouth and go through the side to access the membrane that lines the sinus. They lift up the membrane and insert the grafting material. A sinus graft is a very predictable method of creating bone in the upper area of the jaw.

“Essentially, we add the thickness of bone that we need with the graft and put the membrane over the top of that,” informs Dr. Brown. “The membrane is designed to keep tissue out and to allow the bone to grow. After we have good bone established, which usually takes anywhere from three to six months, we can place the implants and the teeth on top of them.

“This is another way we can make dental implants available to more people. Even if patients don’t have a lot of bone, there’s still hope. With bone grafting and sinus grafting, the conditions can be created for successful implant placement.”

Christopher was given a sinus graft, which produced sufficient bone to securely hold his implants in place.

Seeing is believing

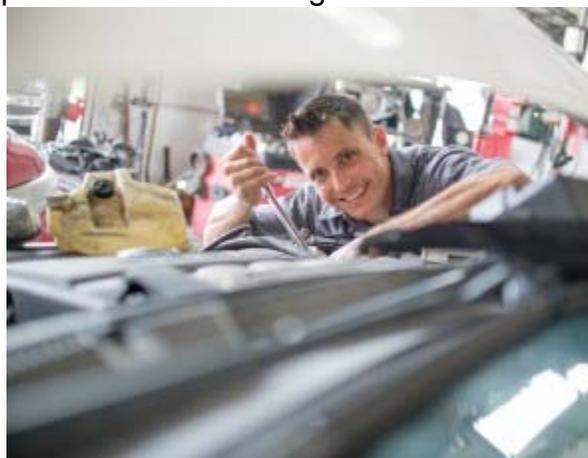
Using updated technology now available at Implant Dentistry of Florida, Dr. Brown is able to do precise placement of dental implants by placing them with guidance. He can do this thanks to recent upgrades to his computer, 3-D imaging equipment and CEREC CAD/CAM system.

“Now, I can do precise placement of the implant as opposed to an as-accurate-as-possible placement,” reports Dr. Brown. “To do this, I start with where I want the final tooth to be and work backward.”

The first step in the process is to take an intraoral image with the CEREC 3-D camera and a 3-D x-ray with the cone beam CT scanner. Dr. Brown then imports the intraoral image into his cone beam scanner, which translates it into x-ray images.

“Using those images, I can virtually place the implant in the exact position it needs to be in to support the final restoration,” educates Dr. Brown. “The data showing where I want the implant is sent back to the CEREC, where I can design the surgical guide for the implant surgery on the computer. After I design the guide, it is created by the CEREC milling unit.”

The guide itself is milled out of a block of acrylic right in the office at Implant Dentistry of Florida.



“I put the guide in the patient’s mouth and then the implants are placed through it,” states Dr. Brown. “It guides the exact position and depth for the implants, and makes the surgery quick and easy. This technique also eliminates the need for any scalpel or sutures.”

Implant positive

When Christopher and Russell completed their treatment and had their dental implants, they were both very happy with the final outcome. They were amazed at how much the restorations looked and functioned like their natural teeth.

“They’re just like real teeth,” relates Russell. “You cannot tell the difference. I’m not worried about them breaking. I’m not worried about them looking different. They look exactly like my teeth.”

“They’re beautiful,” agrees Christopher. “They look like my original teeth, and they act like my original teeth. I can eat a sandwich again. It was hard to bite into a sandwich before.”

Getting chewing function back was important to Russell, too. He is now able to eat the foods he avoided because he can chew them without disability and discomfort.

“I can chew on my right side now,” says Russell. “I can eat crunchy foods. I can do everything I could before my teeth were messed up.”

Russell is thrilled with Dr. Brown and with the treatment he received from him. Under his care, there was little pain with the tooth extraction and implant procedures. Like Christopher, Russell is not a fan of dentists, but he says the dentist and his staff helped make his visits comfortable and easy.



“Dr. Brown is great,” notes Russell. “The whole staff is great. They know what they’re doing. The staff is nice and they calmed me down. Going to the dentist isn’t always the most pleasant thing, but they assured me everything was going to be okay.”

The staff also impressed Christopher, as did the technology available at Implant Dentistry of Florida. In his profession, having the right tools for the job is imperative to getting the job done right.

“The staff was awesome and nice,” describes Christopher. “They told light jokes that put me at ease. The facility is top of the line. Dr. Brown’s got equipment there that I’ve never seen in any other doctor’s office. He showed me on the computer where my implants would be and where he was drilling and the whole plan. It was state of the art.

“Being an auto technician, I understand about tools and how to get the job done. Dr. Brown definitely has the equipment to get it done.”

With great outcomes and having had excellent experiences, Russell and Christopher are pleased that they chose Dr. Brown and Implant Dentistry of Florida. Both have indicated that they would gladly pass on the word about the outstanding dentist and his practice.

“I would definitely recommend implants, and I would definitely recommend Dr. Brown,” offers Christopher. “I won’t go anywhere else while I’m in Florida.”

“Dr. Brown is the man,” adds Russell. “He’s one hundred percent qualified. I’ve been to a lot of other dentists, and I definitely recommend him. Dr. Brown is top notch.”

FHCN article by Patti DiPanfilo. Photos by Nerissa Johnson. Before image courtesy of Deland Implant Dentistry.

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