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## **Are Dental Implants Always the Answer?**

Dr. Thomas G. Rubino

What a strange question coming from someone who has been doing implants for twenty-six years. I am so concerned that I needed to write this column.

When I was in practice early in my career, we had denture mills. What were denture mills? They were large offices where people could go to have their teeth extracted and have dentures made all in the same day. Some denture practices still exist today. They are a necessary adjunct for those people who have no other options to save their teeth.

I can't tell you how many patients come into our office every year stating that they want all their teeth out but many times we come up with solutions that are more comfortable and less costly than the full extraction route. With the collaboration of providers such as a periodontist, general dentist, and a hygienist these patients may have the option of saving their teeth.

Today there are dental implant centers that do only one thing, take your teeth out and put in implant supported teeth. They are the new denture mills. The ads look nice, and frankly that service is a great service for someone who needs it. We have been providing the same service for years, and the patients who do need it are very happy. But if you go to a denture mill you are likely to be given only one choice, dentures. Furthermore, when you go to a dental implant center, you're also likely to get only one choice, dental implants. That's a shame, because if your teeth can be predictably saved, that is often a better, and more predictable long-term option than dental implants. As good as the advertising is, dental implants have problems too. They have to be maintained and cleaned just like teeth need to be cleaned. And dental implants can fail as well.

What is the patient who is frustrated by his or her teeth to do? Find a dentist that you can talk to, that can assess all of your needs, and can give you the pros and cons of every option. A periodontist will give you that assessment. Periodontists have additional training to determine the prognosis of teeth (to treat & save if possible). Then you have a clear choice of what can be done.

So, from one who is known for dental implants, don't assume that dental implants are the only answer. Find a good periodontist, look at all the options, and then come to the conclusion that is right for you.

Sincerely,

Dr. Thomas G. Rubino

For a thorough periodontal, tooth & implant exam, including any/all Xrays call Dr Rubino at (941)792-0029

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