

Missing Teeth (Hypodontia)

What is Hypodontia?

Hypodontia is where one or more baby or adult teeth are missing from the mouth.

How many people does it affect?

Hypodontia is more common in females and can affect up to 6% of the population.

Which teeth are usually missing?

Usually one or two teeth are missing and these are commonly the lower back teeth (second premolars) and/or top front teeth (lateral incisors). If a baby tooth is missing it increases the risk of the adult tooth being absent.

What causes Hypodontia?

The exact cause is unknown but genetics can play a strong role and there may be other people in your family who also are born with missing adult teeth.

Can hypodontia affect other teeth?

Patients with hypodontia may also have smaller, pointy adult teeth, resulting in greater spaces between them. In addition, the speed with which the adult teeth grow into the mouth may be slower.

How long will my baby teeth last for?

The baby teeth are normally lost by the time you are 12-14 years old. In cases of hypodontia, it is difficult to know exactly how long the baby teeth will last. In some cases, providing the baby teeth are healthy they may last for 20 years or more.

What is the Hypodontia clinic?

You are being referred to the Hypodontia clinic, to meet the team of Consultant Orthodontists, Restorative and Paediatric dentists who will assess your teeth and how they bite together. This provides the opportunity to decide the best course of treatment and discuss the options.

What are the treatment options?



Before Treatment



After treatment with bridges

There are a number of treatment options, which include;

1. **No treatment**- providing the space where your adult tooth/teeth should be isn't visible or does not bother you.
2. **Close the space** of the missing adult tooth/teeth
3. **Open space** to replace the missing adult tooth/teeth. The space can be replaced by the most appropriate option from the following:-

Bridge: A false tooth that is attached by a wing glued to the back of one or both teeth either side of the space. Most patients completing brace treatment will receive a bridge.

Implant: These can only be provided when the patient has finished growing, at a minimum age of 18 years and has sufficient bone. Implants are titanium screws placed in the jaw bones with a false tooth attached on top. There is no guarantee that implants will be funded indefinitely under the NHS.

Denture: A removable plate with false teeth attached. Often only used in severe cases when several teeth need replacing.

Who will replace the missing teeth?

This will depend on where the brace treatment is being carried out and may be undertaken by the specialist (restorative) dentists in the hospital or by your general dentist, depending on the complexity and number of missing teeth.

Why do I need to wear braces?

As the gaps are often not in the best place or are the wrong size, most patients have orthodontic treatment with fixed braces to straighten their teeth and open space in the correct position for the false tooth. Braces are also needed to close the spaces between the teeth.

How long will I have my braces on for?

Most treatment isn't started until all the adult teeth have erupted and braces are likely to be worn for a minimum of 3 and half years, but it can take longer. It is important the teeth are kept healthy during this period and that you attend regularly for your brace adjustment appointments.

Once the teeth are straight and in the right position you will receive retainers for a minimum of 6 months, BEFORE the missing teeth are replaced. At this point you will be re-assessed to determine what the most suitable form of tooth replacement will be from the options mentioned earlier.

Orthodontic Department

1st Floor,
Dental School,
The Royal London Hospital,
Whitechapel,
London E1 1BB

Tel: **020 7767 3200**