

IMPLANTS

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Should You Probe Dental Implants?

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The answer is YES.

Proper evaluation of the dental implant (<https://www.speareducation.com/spear-review/category/implants>), with baseline information that includes probing, is necessary when making a determination of health or disease. This subject was controversial years ago - however, current research supports it as beneficial.



The consensus report of the sixth European workshop on periodontology indicated the following data collection for the evaluation of peri-implant diseases.¹

- Bleeding on probing
- Suppuration
- Probing depth
- Radiographic bone loss
- Implant mobility

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Probing around dental implants

There is an increased number of dental implants being placed, as well as reported cases of peri-implant diseases (mucositis 50 percent of the dental implants in function and peri-implantitis is 12 to 43 percent) making the surveillance critical. When assessing a dental implant, understanding the differences between the soft tissue surrounding teeth and the soft tissue surrounding dental implants are paramount. Dental implants have a weaker hemidesmosomal attachment. This makes probing around implants more sensitive than teeth. Gentle pressure should be used; the safest pressure to probe is 20 g.

A metal or plastic probe may be used; however, many clinicians would agree that having a flexible probe is helpful when trying to navigate around the height of contour of a dental implant restoration. Flexibility is desirable, particularly with varied prosthetic designs: narrow dental implants and platform-switching dental implants. Additionally, a plastic probe may reduce the potential trauma to the perimucosal seal.

When probing dental implants, it is important to note the depth is not as meaningful (as it is with natural teeth), as the sulcus around implants is created surgically rather than from development. Whenever longer implant abutments are used, greater probing depths will naturally correspond. Probing at maintenance visits will give you a comparison of changes.

The only time to avoid probing is during the initial healing and integration phase. The recommended time period may vary between surgeons, but it typically ranges from three to six months. If the dental implant has been restored, it is presumed integrated and therefore safe to probe.

References

1. J Clin Periodontol. 2008 Sep;35(8 Suppl):282-5. doi: 10.1111/j.1600-051X.2008.01283.x. Peri-implant diseases: Consensus Report of the Sixth European Workshop on Periodontology. Lindhe J1, Meyle J; Group D of European Workshop on Periodontology.

IMPLANTS - THE SURGICAL/RESTORATIVE CONNECTION

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