



# Implant dentistry: how to get started

**What is the best course of action for a new graduate wanting to get involved in implant dentistry? Read on and find out...**

With all the pressures that surround people today there is a temptation to take short cuts wherever possible. The misguided belief that that an impressive website will compensate for knowledge, training and experience most often results in a rocky professional path paved with stress and dissatisfaction.

The first decision for a person considering a career in implant dentistry is to decide at which level they wish to be involved. There are essentially three ways to be involved:

- 1. Recognise and refer all implant cases**
- 2. Recognise and refer the surgical phase, restoring the implant placed by a suitably trained surgeon**
- 3. After appropriate training deal with implant cases in their entirety.**

The training in implant dentistry is minimal at undergraduate level and those wishing to incorporate this treatment modality into their careers need a great deal more tutoring and studying.

What is a worthwhile training pathway? As a general rule it is best to start with the restorative phase of implant dentistry. The restoratively driven implant is a title often quoted in the implant literature. The end result of a case should be seen at the start stage and to this end the restorative dentist should be prescribing position and arrangement of the teeth for the surgeon. There are many courses that teach restorative phases for implant dentistry from section 63 through to teaching hospital-based courses. Many of these are worthwhile attending, though it is also worth checking background and training of the speaker/lecturer.

The pathways of implant training vary in the amount they will offer the student. The most basic is a one-day course then a weekend course. The Royal College of Surgeons of England now offers a diploma in implant dentistry details of which, may be researched through the college. The best and most thorough method of formal training is the Masters programme, which is offered at Guy's hospital London or the Eastman Dental Institute. These two establishments undertake either a one-year full time (Eastman) or two years part time (Guy's) academic, practical and research-based training so they naturally are held in the highest regard. A couple of other hospitals outside London are starting up masters programmes and the details may be found through the GDC website.



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