

How to Choose a Dentist for Dental Implants in Melbourne

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Description:

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Details:

Dental implants are the gold standard for replacing missing teeth — and for good reason. Unlike dentures that sit on the gum or bridges that rely on neighbouring teeth, implants are anchored directly into the jawbone, functioning and feeling like natural teeth. They can last decades with proper care, restore full chewing ability, and prevent the bone loss that inevitably follows tooth extraction.

But dental implants are also one of the most complex and technique-sensitive treatments in dentistry. The difference between a well-placed implant and a poorly placed one can mean the difference between a restoration that lasts twenty years and one that fails within two. Choosing the right implant dentist is therefore one of the most consequential decisions you will make for your oral health.

This guide walks you through exactly what to look for — and what to avoid — when choosing a dentist for dental implants in Melbourne's suburbs.

Understanding Who Can Place Dental Implants

In Australia, dental implants can be placed by general dentists with appropriate training, as well as by dental specialists. Understanding who does what will help you evaluate your options:

General Dentists with Implant Training

Many experienced general dentists have completed extensive postgraduate training in implant placement and restoration. They can handle straightforward to moderately complex implant cases — single tooth replacements, implant-supported bridges, and cases where bone volume is adequate.

At Core Dental, Dr Evan Gai has a particular interest in oral surgery and dental implants, bringing experience from both private practice and university-level training. Dr Anna Lai (Carrum Downs) is completing a two-year Fellowship in Restorative Dentistry, which includes advanced training in implant-supported restorations — the crowns, bridges, and prosthetics that attach to the implant fixture.

Specialist Periodontists

For complex cases — particularly those involving significant bone loss, the need for bone grafting, or implant placement in the aesthetic zone (front teeth where appearance is critical) — a specialist periodontist brings additional expertise. Periodontists complete three to five years of additional university training beyond their dental degree, focusing on the gums, bone, and supporting structures of the teeth.

Dr Nupur Kataria, a specialist periodontist at Core Dental Wyndham, holds a Doctorate in Clinical Dentistry (Periodontics) from the University of Adelaide and is a Fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Dental Surgeons (Periodontics). She is also a member of the International Team for Implantology (ITI) — one of the world's leading academic organisations dedicated to implant dentistry. Dr Kataria provides implant surgery, bone grafting, and gum lifts, working collaboratively with Core Dental's general dentists who then restore the implant with the final crown or bridge.

The Collaborative Model

The best implant outcomes often come from a collaborative approach: a specialist places the implant surgically, and your general dentist designs and fits the final restoration. This model combines surgical precision with restorative expertise — and when both clinicians work within the same practice or network, communication is seamless.

At Core Dental, this collaborative model is built into the network's structure. A patient at any of the seven locations can be referred internally to Dr Kataria for implant surgery, then return to their local general dentist for the restorative phase — all without leaving the Core Dental network.

Eight Factors to Evaluate When Choosing an Implant Dentist

1. Qualifications, Registration, and Implant-Specific Training

Every dentist placing implants in Australia must hold current AHPRA registration. Beyond that baseline, look for:

- **Postgraduate implant training** — university-based courses, mini-residencies, or fellowships in implant dentistry
- **ADA membership** — confirming a commitment to continuing education and ethical standards
- **Specialist registration** (if applicable) — AHPRA clearly distinguishes between general dentists and registered specialists
- **Membership in implant-focused organisations** — such as the International Team for Implantology (ITI), the Australian Society of Implant Dentistry, or the Australasian Osseointegration Society

You can verify any dentist's or specialist's registration by searching the AHPRA register online — a step that takes thirty seconds and should be non-negotiable before any surgical procedure.

2. Diagnostic Technology and Treatment Planning

Implant placement is a surgical procedure that demands precise planning. A well-equipped practice should offer:

- **3D cone beam CT (CBCT) scanning** — providing a three-dimensional view of your jawbone, nerve pathways, sinus position, and neighbouring tooth roots. This is essential for safe, accurate implant placement and cannot be replaced by standard 2D X-rays.
- **Digital intraoral scanning** — for precise digital impressions that inform the design of your final restoration
- **Guided implant surgery capability** — using a 3D-printed surgical guide based on your CT scan to direct the implant into the exact planned position, reducing surgical time and improving accuracy
- **Digital smile design** — for cases in the aesthetic zone, allowing you to preview how the final restoration will look before surgery begins

Core Dental's Caroline Springs and Epping practices feature 3D imaging and digital scanning. The network's digital workflow enables precise implant planning and, where appropriate, guided surgical protocols.

3. Range of Implant Solutions Offered

Dental implants are not one-size-fits-all. Your provider should be experienced with a range of solutions:

- ****Single tooth implants**** — replacing one missing tooth with an individual implant and crown - ****Implant-supported bridges**** — replacing multiple adjacent missing teeth with two or more implants supporting a bridge - ****All-on-4 (full arch rehabilitation)**** — replacing an entire arch of teeth with just four strategically placed implants supporting a fixed prosthesis - ****Bone grafting**** — rebuilding bone volume where it has been lost, making implant placement possible in areas previously considered unsuitable - ****Sinus lifts**** — augmenting bone in the upper jaw near the sinus cavity - ****Immediate implants**** — placing an implant on the same day as a tooth extraction in appropriate cases

Core Dental's Berwick location specifically lists All-on-4 implants and full mouth rehabilitation among its services, while Dr Nupur Kataria at Wyndham performs bone grafting and implant surgery for cases requiring specialist surgical expertise.

4. The Implant System Used

Not all implant systems are equal. There are dozens of implant manufacturers globally, ranging from premium systems backed by decades of research to budget alternatives with limited clinical data. Ask your provider:

- ****What implant brand and system do you use?**** Established brands like Straumann, Nobel Biocare, and Dentsply Sirona have the longest track records and most extensive clinical research. - ****Why did you choose this system?**** A provider who can articulate their reasoning demonstrates considered clinical judgement. - ****Are replacement components readily available?**** If you need a replacement part in five or ten years, will the system still be manufactured and supported? - ****Is the implant backed by a manufacturer warranty?**** Premium systems typically offer warranties against manufacturing defects.

5. The Laboratory and Restoration Quality

The implant fixture (the titanium screw placed in your jawbone) is invisible — but the restoration on top (the crown, bridge, or prosthesis) is what you see and use every day. The quality of this restoration depends heavily on the dental laboratory that fabricates it.

Core Dental maintains an in-house dental laboratory led by master ceramist Greg Karabasis (Diploma of Dental Technology, RMIT University), supported by senior technicians Agne Diliartaite and Noemi Miele. In-house fabrication means direct communication between your dentist and the ceramist, custom colour matching to your natural teeth, and quality control that outsourced laboratories cannot replicate.

Dental prosthetists Ahmed Saoud (Caroline Springs, Epping, Wyndham) and Alessio Pecorella (Carrum Downs, Berwick) also provide denture and prosthetic services within the network, ensuring that implant-supported prosthetics — including full arch dentures — are designed and fitted to the highest standards.

6. Bone Grafting and Complex Case Capability

Many patients who need implants have already experienced bone loss — either from long-term tooth absence, gum disease, or traumatic extraction. If your jawbone lacks sufficient volume, bone grafting may be required before or during implant placement.

Not all dentists are trained or equipped for bone grafting. If your case involves:

- Significant bone loss in the implant area - Previous failed implants - Multiple missing teeth with varying bone levels - Upper jaw implants near the sinus cavity (requiring a sinus lift)

...you should seek a provider with demonstrated grafting experience, or one who works closely with a specialist periodontist or oral surgeon.

Dr Nupur Kataria at Core Dental Wyndham performs bone grafting, gum lifts, and complex implant surgery as part of her specialist practice. Patients from any Core Dental location can be referred to Dr Kataria for the surgical phase, then return to their local practice for the restorative component.

7. Cost Transparency and Realistic Expectations

Dental implants are a significant investment, with single-tooth implant costs in Melbourne typically ranging from \$4,000 to \$6,500 (including the implant fixture, abutment, and crown). Full arch rehabilitation (All-on-4 or similar) can range from \$20,000 to \$35,000 per arch.

Before proceeding, make sure you receive:

- **A written treatment plan with itemised costs** — covering every component: consultation, imaging, surgery, bone grafting (if needed), temporary restoration, final restoration, and follow-up appointments
- **A clear timeline** — implant treatment often spans three to six months (longer if grafting is required); understand each phase before committing
- **Health fund information** — some components of implant treatment may attract partial health fund rebates. HICAPS on-site simplifies claiming.
- **Payment plan options** — interest-free instalment plans make implant treatment accessible without financial stress

Core Dental provides written treatment plans with full cost breakdowns at every location. Interest-free payment plans through Payright are available from \$1,000 to \$20,000 over 3 to 30 months. HICAPS is on-site at all seven practices.

8. Aftercare and Long-Term Maintenance

An implant does not end at the final crown fitting. Long-term success depends on:

- **Regular professional maintenance** — implants need periodic professional cleaning, just like natural teeth. Dental hygienists like Alexis Martinez (Caroline Springs, Wyndham), Sina Hassani (Epping), and Isabelle Sayers (Berwick) provide ongoing maintenance alongside your regular dental check-ups.
- **Monitoring for peri-implantitis** — inflammation around implants that, if left untreated, can lead to bone loss and implant failure. Your dentist should check for this at every visit.
- **Home care instructions** — proper brushing, interdental cleaning, and potentially specialised tools like water flossers
- **A long-term recall schedule** — typically every six months, integrated with your regular dental check-ups

A provider who places the implant and then expects you to manage everything alone is not providing complete care.

Red Flags in Implant Dentistry

Be cautious of any provider who:

- **Offers implant placement without 3D imaging** — a standard 2D X-ray is insufficient for safe implant planning
- **Quotes unusually low prices** — cut-rate implants often use unknown implant systems, skip essential diagnostic steps, or outsource laboratory work to the cheapest provider
- **Guarantees a specific outcome** — while implant success rates are high (typically above 95 per cent), no surgical procedure can be guaranteed with absolute certainty
- **Rushes you into treatment** — implant dentistry requires careful planning; urgency is rarely warranted
- **Cannot explain what implant system they use or why** — a competent implant clinician should be able to articulate their choice of system clearly
- **Does not discuss bone grafting as a possibility** — many cases require it, and failing to address bone deficiency leads to implant failure
- **Has no referral pathway for complex cases** — knowing when to involve a specialist is a sign of clinical maturity, not weakness

The Core Dental Implant Pathway

Core Dental provides a clear, coordinated pathway for implant patients across its seven Melbourne locations:

1. **Initial consultation** at your local Core Dental practice — comprehensive examination, digital X-rays, and discussion of your goals
2. **3D imaging and planning** — CBCT scanning and digital

treatment planning 3. ****Specialist referral if needed**** — complex cases are referred internally to Dr Nupur Kataria (specialist periodontist, Wyndham) for surgical planning and implant placement 4. ****Implant surgery**** — performed by your trained GP dentist or specialist, depending on case complexity 5. ****Healing phase**** — typically three to six months for the implant to integrate with the bone 6. ****Restoration**** — your local Core Dental dentist designs and fits the final crown, bridge, or prosthesis, fabricated by the in-house laboratory 7. ****Ongoing maintenance**** — regular check-ups and professional cleaning at your local practice

This integrated model means you are never passed between unconnected practices. Every clinician involved in your care has access to your records, communicates directly with the team, and works within the same clinical governance framework overseen by Clinical Director Dr Philippa Robinson.

Core Dental is part of the Smile Solutions Group, providing an additional layer of clinical depth. For the most complex reconstructive cases, patients can access the broader Smile Solutions specialist network — one of Australia's largest multidisciplinary dental teams.

Your Implant Dentist Checklist

Before committing to implant treatment, confirm:

- ☐ Is the clinician AHPRA-registered and an ADA member? - ☐ Does the practice have 3D CBCT scanning on-site or readily accessible? - ☐ Can the clinician explain their implant system and why they chose it? - ☐ Is bone grafting available if I need it — either in-house or through a specialist referral? - ☐ Will I receive a written treatment plan with itemised costs before surgery? - ☐ Does the practice use an in-house or reputable external laboratory for restorations? - ☐ Are interest-free payment plans available? - ☐ Is there a clear long-term maintenance plan after the implant is placed? - ☐ Does the practice have a specialist referral pathway for complex cases?

If you can answer yes to every question, you are in a strong position to proceed with confidence.

****Considering dental implants?**** Book a consultation online at coredental.com.au(<https://coredental.com.au>) or call ****13 13 16**** to speak with a team member at your nearest Core Dental location.