

The High Price of Bargain Dental Implants

The stagnant economy has caused consumers to be more cost conscious than ever before and many patients have succumbed to the advertising claims of affordable dental implants. Unfortunately, they assume that all dental implants are the same and that all dentists and specialists provide the same level of care.

The truth is that surgical specialists rarely promote or provide bargain implant treatment, and most dentists promoting bargain dental implants do not provide quality treatment. Stories abound with the frustration and pain caused by bargain implant treatment that failed and had to be completely redone by specialists at a significant cost in both financial resources and time.

- Implants placed in the wrong position that had to be removed
- Unsatisfactory aesthetic outcomes that could not be completely corrected
- Loss of bone and soft tissue from infections that needed multiple procedures to repair



Low Cost Implant Treatment Requires Cutting Corners

Given the fact that a dental implant is a medical device that is surgically placed in a human being, the concept of “bargain” implant treatment is frightening. But that doesn’t seem to deter those dentists who offer low cost implant treatment, simply to attract new business. Some of the methods used to cut costs include the following:

- Using knock off dental implants that are not the highest quality.
- Reusing components, previously used for other patients.
- Compromising treatment outcomes by not placing bone grafts that are often needed to provide ideal aesthetic results.
- Rushing through the treatment planning phase, which can result in problems with the final fit and function of the replacement teeth.
- Skipping important diagnostic steps, such as 3D imaging, which often leads to improper implant placement and positioning.
- Utilizing a low cost dental lab that creates poor quality replacement teeth that rarely fit properly. These labs often use questionable metals.

But by far the most significant problem with cutting corners is lack of adequate training in surgical procedures and treatment of complications.

DENTAL IMPLANT GUIDE



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The high cost of bargain implant treatment is best explained with an actual patient's story. A woman who needed an implant to replace a front tooth was referred to an oral surgeon for an implant and bone graft. Her dentist planned to provide the crown.

However, the patient saw an advertisement for an implant and crown for only \$2,000 and decided to have that dentist provide her treatment. The outcome was not satisfactory due to improper implant placement, no bone graft to enhance the aesthetics, and damaged soft tissue. The patient had to return to her dentist and the oral surgeon to have the implant removed, a bone graft, a new implant and a new crown. The total costs were as follows:

| Bargain Implant Treatment | |
|---------------------------|----------------|
| Implant | \$1,000 |
| Bone Graft | -0- |
| Crown | <u>\$1,000</u> |
| | \$2,000 |
| Remove Implant | \$ 900 |
| Bone Graft | \$1,600 |
| New Implant | \$2,300 |
| New Crown | <u>\$1,800</u> |
| | \$6,600 |

The patient paid \$8,600 total for her implant and crown, whereas if she had followed the advice of her dentist and had the quality treatment, the cost would have been \$4,900.

| Quality Treatment | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| Implant | \$2,300 |
| Bone Graft | \$ 800 |
| Crown | <u>\$1,800</u> |
| | \$4,900 |

Surgical Specialists Provide a Higher Level of Care and Quality

Most surgical specialists utilize dental implant systems that have been thoroughly researched in numerous clinical studies before they are brought to market. These dental implants are not inexpensive due to the time and cost of proper research and development. The surgical specialists who use these dental implants believe that all patients deserve the highest quality treatment possible and therefore, since the dental implants are more expensive than the cheaper "knock-off" implants, the treatment fees are higher than those advertised for "bargain" dental implants.

In reality, it is usually more costly to proceed with cheap dental implant treatment, rather than having it done properly in the first place. Therefore, the experience of the surgical specialist and the quality of the implants being placed should be higher priorities than the cost of treatment. With implant dentistry, as with most healthcare, you get what you pay for – and if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.