



## **Patient Information Leaflet Only Bone Grafting and Implants**

**Cork University Dental  
School & Hospital**



This leaflet has been designed to explain onlay bone grafting and it contains answers to many frequently asked questions. If you have any other questions that the leaflet does not answer, or if you would like further information, please ask us.

### **What is an onlay bone graft and why do I need one?**

Some people who want to have dental implants do not have enough jaw bone to hold the implant securely. It may be possible to take bone from elsewhere in your body and place it in your jaw in order to allow an implant to be placed. Bone grafts may also be needed to improve the shape of the bone and gum at an implant site so that it looks well afterwards.

### **How is onlay bone grafting surgery done?**

The surgery is normally done as a day case – you will be in and out of hospital on the same day. You will usually have a general anaesthetic (be completely asleep). When only a small amount of bone is needed we can transfer bone from one part of the jaw to the other. Bone is taken from the back of the jaw or from the chin area and transferred to wherever it is needed. It is fixed in position with small pins or screws that can be removed when the implants are placed. Flaps of gum are lifted in both areas to uncover the bone and these flaps are stitched back into place with dissolvable stitches afterwards. Where larger amounts of bone are needed we may need to take bone from your hip instead.

### **What are the risks?**

As with all surgery there is a risk of pain, swelling, bruising, bleeding and infection. Other risks include -

- A risk of numbness, tingling or pain in the area of the lip and chin. This usually gets better by itself but it can take weeks or months. Some people have a permanent change in sensation.
- The graft may fail and there may not be enough bone to take implants. In this case further grafting may be necessary.
- The risk of failure is higher in some people, especially in smokers. Your surgeon will tell you if they think the risk of failure is higher than normal in your case.
- Your denture may not fit as well following the surgery.

### **What happens next?**

In most cases the graft will be left alone to heal for a period of six months before surgery is carried out to insert the dental implants.

**This leaflet is available online at <http://www.ucc.ie/en/dentalschool/patients>**