

# Just Like a Real Tooth

## A True Story About Dental Implants

By Alexander Germanis

So many things in our modern world are artificial. Artificial flavors and colorings are in our food, we play sports on artificial turf, we even have a degree of artificial intelligence in our computers.

More often than not, however, the artificial things never quite live up to their authentic counterparts. But for Michael — a patient of Emil Verban, Jr. DDS of Bloomington — the artificial actually turned out to be not only as good as the authentic, but even better.

Michael's problem with his teeth began when he was serving in the United States Army. "I had one cavity when I was in the army and the dentist filled it, but he got too much filling in it," Michael recalls. "It hurt and everything would irritate the nerve. Every time I ate something the nerve would go spastic."

Six weeks after his discharge from the service, Michael visited a civilian dentist who wanted to do a root canal. "I should have had

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it done," Michael admits. "I just wanted it out of my mouth. I didn't want this much pain."

The solution, it was decided, lay in a partial denture — in Michael's case, a single tooth. "It just snapped in," he describes. "But it ruins your teeth on both sides of it after so many years."

When it came time to place a bridge to replace the partial, however, the solution again became a problem of its own. A bridge involves grinding down the adjacent teeth — often healthy teeth — in order to place a crown on the affected tooth. Worse still, Michael jokes, "The only thing the bridge did was get stuff caught under it."

While he admits the bridge did serve its purpose overall for the 20 plus years he had it, "It just wasn't like a real tooth."

Worse still, the teeth began to decay below the gum line, necessitating a removal of the teeth completely before they caused more problems. That is when the idea of getting implants finally came up; his periodontist at the time suggested he see Dr. Verban.

"It took eight weeks to do it, from start to finish," Michael remembers. "They just screwed these posts into my jawbone. It took a few weeks to let them get seated and they put the implant [tooth] on top of them. It was not painful at all, to be honest. Dr. Verban did a fantastic job."

Four years after the implants were placed, Michael is no less convinced he made the right decision. "They are so near like a tooth," he says. "I have no problem with them and they're so much better than bridges."


As for keeping them clean, Michael says the semi-annual trip to the dentist is a little different. "They're not supposed to use the same steel picks on them to clean them, because they're not a real tooth," he says. "They're supposed to use plastic picks. I suppose the steel picks could scratch them. So, when I go to the hygienist, I say I have implants and they get the other tools out; they know what to do."

Besides the slight difference in the cleaning process, Michael has seen no difference in his daily routine, including his eating habits. "I tell everybody I could eat rocks with them," he jokes. "They're just like real teeth; I can eat anything."

"If anybody has any doubt about it, I would recommend it highly," he continues. "I have just been thrilled. I can't say enough good about them. If I lost another tooth, I would have it done again."

*For more information or to schedule an appointment, you may contact Emil Verban, Jr., DDS at 309-662-8448 or visit [www.mcleancountydental.com](http://www.mcleancountydental.com). McLean County Dental is located at 2103 E. Washington Street in Bloomington. Dr. Verban provides his patients both general dentistry expertise and the ability to provide specialized services such as cosmetic procedures and dental implants.*

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