Everything will be alright after having dental implant?

Dental implant is used in dental treatment for the replacement of missing tooth. Dental implant is made of biocompatible material like titanium. It is placed in the jaw bone, and functions as the root of a tooth to support a false single crown. Dental implants can also act as abutments to support a group of false teeth in the form of dental bridge or removable denture.

People may misunderstand that they will have no further oral problem after putting in dental implant. Even though dental implant and its supporting false teeth do not decay, if oral self-care is not good enough, there will be problems on the tissues around the dental implant. The tissues may become inflamed and develop into so called peri-implantitis. The dental implant may become loose and eventually come out. Therefore, long-term maintenance for keeping good oral hygiene is essential for the durability of dental implant.

Is dental implant placement always successful?

Placement of dental implant is a minor oral surgery. The success rate is dependent on the general health status and the condition of the jaw bone. If the recovery function of the body is good, dental implant placement will have higher chance of success. On the other hand, researches showed that smokers, persons with diabetes, persons currently having or with history of severe gum disease, etc., could have more complications or higher failure rate on dental implant placement.

How to take care of dental implant supported false teeth?

Cleaning the oral cavity thoroughly in the morning and before bed at night every day is necessary to prevent accumulation of dental plaque and inflammation of tissues surrounding the dental implants.

- Single tooth implant:
  The oral self-care method is similar to that for a natural tooth. Brush along the gum margin, and use dental floss or interdental brush to clean the interdental surfaces.

- Implant supported dental bridge:
  If the false teeth are supported by two or more dental implant abutments, the cleaning method is similar to that for a conventional dental bridge. As there is a gap between the false teeth and the gum, it is necessary to use superfloss or interdental brush to clean around the dental implant and the gap.
Upper or lower removable denture:
Take off the denture, and then use a single-tuft toothbrush to clean the dental implant abutments circumferentially. Clean the denture in a way similar to that for conventional denture. Take off the denture every night before bed, use soft toothbrush and cleaning agent like detergent to clean every part of the denture. Then rinse it with water, and immerse it in a glass of water overnight.

Extra points to note after placement of dental implant
Dental implant supported false teeth can help to improve chewing ability. However, if the maintenance is not appropriate, many problems will be induced e.g. peri-implantitis that causes pain or abscess formation and may cause chewing problem eventually.

To increase the durability of dental implant and its supporting false teeth, the following should be aware of:

1. Avoid frequent chewing of hard food like nuts, hard candy, etc., to prevent fracture of the false tooth.
2. Avoid chronic hard chewing, otherwise the screws or the implant fixture may eventually become loose or fractured.
3. Smoking is hazardous to the health of the tissues surrounding the implant fixture; therefore it is essential to quit smoking.
4. After the dental implant treatment, it is necessary to have regular dental check-up. If there is any problem, it can be identified and managed early.
5. In case there is abnormal condition felt or detected, like loosening of the implant tooth or discomfort from the tissue around the dental implant, it is necessary to go to see the dentist as soon as possible to have check-up and follow-up.