



Smart Buys by Louis Malcmacher, DDS, MAGD

Atlas Denture Comfort Implants from Dentatus USA, Ltd.



Atlas Denture Comfort Implants

Most denture wearers hate their lower denture and most dentists I know hate making them. Implants can make you love the denture patient again, especially narrow diameter implants. For many of my patients, financial constraints, not enough bone, gross bone resorption and health issues severely limit ideal bone augmentation and conventional implant placement. I didn't think there was an alternative until I found out about and started placing narrow diameter implants.

Atlas Denture Comfort Implants made by Dentatus USA, Ltd., were developed in conjunction with New York University College of Dentistry Department of Implant Dentistry to be simple and affordable alternatives to conventional implant-supported dentures. The standard technique requires no surgical incision and no sutures – both of which are typical for conventional implants – and it can be performed in a general dentist's office in about an hour. What's more, patients can walk out of the office wearing their refitted dentures. Available in 2.2 and 2.4mm diameters, they can be placed in thin, atrophic ridges without the need for grafting procedures. This implant system is much more cost effective and easier to afford for my patients.

The Atlas technique utilizes a one-piece silicone reline (Tuf-Link) that grips the heads of the implants, known as Dome Keepers, for retention and cushions the patient's ridge for comfort. No metal housings are necessary for this system. The liner is held in place mechanically without the need for adhesives and bonding agents. The silicone liner exhibits less lateral forces, as compared to conventional O-rings and housings. What this means to you and your patient is that the narrow diameter implants do not have to be perfectly parallel, they are easier to place and the technique is accomplished faster.

The Atlas clinical technique is simple. In a nutshell, patients are anesthetized with local infiltration. Osteotomies are started with the needlepoint CePo Pilot drill under copious irrigation to the desired implant length. A reamer corresponding to the implant size is then used to enlarge the osteotomy to the desired size of the final implant. Implants are seated flush with the ridge using a manual driver or ratchet. This process is repeated until all four implants are placed.

The denture base is prepared with a series of specially designed burs creating a seam-line undercut and adequate space for the implant heads. The Tuf-Link liner is dispensed into the denture base and on the implant heads, then placed into the mouth.

Once the liner has set, it is removed from the denture and excess flash material is trimmed away with scissors. The liner is then placed back into the denture base with gentle finger pressure. The implants are immediately loaded and patients are instructed to wear the denture for 10 to 14 days without removal, except for cleaning to prevent edema of the tissue. Can you imagine what it was like for my patient, Mary, who could not use her lower denture for years? She had lost a lot of bone through resorption, is medically compromised and did not have the money for bone grafting and conventional implants. In a simple one-hour procedure, she has a completely functional lower denture that she can use to eat whatever she likes.

Smart Buys Summary: The use of Atlas Narrow Diameter Implants provides a viable and many times better alternative to traditional implant overdenture treatments. Atlas allows the dental practitioner to provide a suitable alternative to the edentulous patient's treatment options. I personally rate this as high as any type of aesthetic dentistry when it comes to changing patients' lives. ■