

What to Tell a New Dentist About Dental Work Done Abroad

By JoD Community Desk · 7 min read

Plenty of people in the Greater Toronto Area have had dental work done somewhere other than Canada. Sometimes it was years ago, in the country they grew up in. Sometimes it was a recent trip, planned partly around treatment that cost less overseas. Either way, when you settle into care with a dentist here, that history matters, and the more clearly you can describe it, the better your ongoing care will be.

The goal is not to judge where the work was done. Good dentistry happens all over the world. The goal is continuity: helping a new dentist understand what is already in your mouth so they can look after it properly.

Why the backstory matters

A crown, a filling, an implant, or a bridge is not a finished object that never needs attention again. Each one has a history, a material, and a way it interacts with the teeth and gums around it. A dentist meeting you for the first time is essentially reading a story that started elsewhere. The clearer the opening chapters, the fewer assumptions they have to make.

Knowing what was done, when, and ideally with what, helps your dentist monitor the work over time, anticipate what might need attention, and avoid surprises. It also helps them give you honest, general guidance about what to expect rather than guessing.

What to tell your new dentist

You do not need to remember everything perfectly. Share what you can, and be honest about what you are unsure of. Helpful details include:

- **What was done.** Crowns, veneers, implants, root canals, bridges, dentures, orthodontics, or gum treatment, and which teeth if you know.
- **When and where.** The rough date and the country are useful even without the clinic's name.
- **Any materials or details you were told.** Some patients were given cards, warranties, or notes describing the implant system or crown material. These are gold for a new dentist.

- **How it has felt since.** Any discomfort, looseness, sensitivity, or changes you have noticed.

If you had an implant placed abroad, mention it specifically. Implants come in many systems, and knowing which one was used, or at least having imaging, helps enormously if a component ever needs to be matched or serviced.

Bring whatever records you have

Records are the most valuable thing you can carry across a border. If you have X-rays, treatment summaries, receipts, or photographs, bring them, even if they are in another language. Images in particular speak a universal language; a dentist can learn a great deal from a radiograph regardless of the text around it.

If you do not have records, that is common and not a problem. Your new dentist can take fresh images and build a current baseline. It simply means the first visit does a little more detective work.

What a new dentist will do with the information

Expect a thorough look and, in many cases, new X-rays to see what is happening below the surface. From there, a dentist can tell you how the existing work appears to be holding up and whether anything warrants monitoring. They may suggest keeping an eye on a particular restoration rather than rushing to replace it, because sound work does not need redoing simply for being done elsewhere.

A good local example of this everyday reality is [a Thornhill dental team](#) such as MiNa Family Dentistry (7191 Yonge St, Unit 205, Thornhill), which, like many neighbourhood practices across the GTA, regularly welcomes patients whose dental history began in another country and picks up their care from where it stands today. Continuing care from an existing starting point is ordinary work for a family practice, not a special case.

Language, measurements, and small translation gaps

Records from abroad sometimes arrive in another language, use different charting conventions, or label teeth by a numbering system your Canadian dentist does not use day to day. This rarely causes real trouble. Tooth-numbering systems can be converted, and a radiograph is readable regardless of the words beside it. If you can translate a few key lines of a treatment summary, or simply explain in your own words what you were told, that often fills any gap. Bring a family member to interpret if it helps you feel more confident describing your history.

It is also worth mentioning if you are mid-treatment. Some people travel home with a temporary crown in place, a course of healing underway after an implant, or orthodontics that still need adjusting. A new dentist will want to know where in the process you are so they can pick up the thread rather than assume the work is finished.

If something does need attention

Occasionally a new dentist will find that an older restoration is failing, that decay has formed beneath a crown, or that an implant area needs review. If that happens, it is not necessarily a reflection on the original work; restorations have a lifespan, and problems can develop anywhere given enough time. Your dentist can explain what they see, lay out the options, and let you decide. Any recommendation should come after an examination of your particular situation, since individual cases differ.

A note on regulation: in Ontario, dentists are registered with the Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario, which sets the standards they practise under. That framework is one reason continuity of care here is worth prioritising once you have arrived.

Frequently asked questions

What should I tell a Canadian dentist about work done overseas?

Describe what was done, roughly when and in which country, any materials or systems you were told about, and how the work has felt since. Bring any X-rays, summaries, or receipts you have, in any language. If you had an implant, say so specifically, as the system used can matter later. Being open about what you do not remember is perfectly fine.

Do I need to replace dental work done in another country?

Not automatically. Sound work does not need redoing simply because it was done elsewhere. A dentist will assess how it is holding up and recommend monitoring or treatment only if there is a reason. Any decision should follow an examination of your specific situation, and the choice remains yours.

What if I have no records at all?

That is common and manageable. Your new dentist can take fresh X-rays and examine your mouth to establish a current picture. Records make the first visit smoother, but their absence does not prevent good ongoing care.

Sources & further reading

- [Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario — Information for Patients](#) — how dentistry is regulated in Ontario and what patients can expect.
- [Canadian Dental Association — Your Oral Health](#) — general guidance on dental care and restorations.
- [Government of Canada — Receiving Medical Care Outside Canada](#) — considerations around care and follow-up when treatment is obtained abroad.

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