

# A Comprehensive Review of Surface Coatings for Enhancement of Anti-Microbial And Anti-Corrosive Properties of Titanium Implant Surface

## Abstract:

Dental implants have revolutionized the field of restorative dentistry, providing a durable and long-lasting solution for replacing missing teeth. Among various biomaterials, titanium has proven to be the most suitable material for dental implants because of its incredible biocompatibility, mechanical properties, and unique surface characteristics. This scientific write-up reviews the comprehensive overview of various surface modification techniques employed to improve the osseointegration, antimicrobial properties, surface topography, and anti-corrosion behavior of titanium as a dental implant biomaterial, highlighting its role in improving implant success rates and long-term clinical outcomes.

## Lacunae on the topic of discussion:

As per our knowledge no extensive review exists that discusses the multifactorial aspects with respect to surface topography, anti-corrosion, and anti-microbial properties of commercially pure titanium or titanium alloy as a whole, altogether. This review compiles all these aspects.

**Key-words:** Titanium, Biomaterial, Dental Implant, Surface Modification, Surface Coating

## Introduction:

Titanium is widely used as a biomaterial for dental and orthopedic implants due to its excellent biocompatibility and mechanical properties. However, the inherent properties of titanium can be further optimized through surface modifications to achieve better outcomes. Surface modifications can alter the surface topography, chemistry, and biological responses of titanium implants, influencing their osseointegration, antimicrobial properties, and corrosion resistance. This write-up explores various surface modification techniques and their implications for improving the performance of titanium implants.

## 1. Physical Surface Modifications:

### 1.1 Sandblasting and Etching:

Sandblasting involves the projection of abrasive particles onto the titanium surface, creating micro-scale roughness that promotes enhanced osseointegration. Etching involves the use

of acid solutions to produce a nanoscale roughened surface. Sandblasting and etching can be combined to create a micro-nano hybrid surface, which has shown superior osseointegration and increased osteoblast activity[1].

### 1.2 Plasma Spraying:

Plasma spraying deposits biocompatible coatings, such as hydroxyapatite (HA) or calcium phosphate, onto the titanium surface. These coatings enhance the biological interaction with bone tissue, promoting faster osseointegration and improving implant stability[2].

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**Received :** 25 July, 2023, **Published :** 31 August, 2023

Access this article online	
<b>Website:</b> www.ujds.in	<b>Quick Response Code</b> 
<b>DOI:</b> https://doi.org/10.21276/ujds.2023.9.3.26	

**How to cite this article:** Singh, A., Sarkar, A., Pokarram, S. S., & Chaturvedi, T. P. (2023). A Comprehensive Review of Surface Coatings for enhancement of Anti-Microbial and Anti-Corrosive Properties of Titanium Implant Surface. UNIVERSITY JOURNAL OF DENTAL SCIENCES, 9 (special is). 82-93

### **1.3 Anodization:**

Anodization involves subjecting the titanium surface to an electrochemical process, forming a stable oxide layer with controlled nanopores. This nanostructured surface has demonstrated improved osteogenic activity and a higher degree of osseointegration[3].

## **2. Chemical Surface Modifications:**

### **2.1 Acid Treatment:**

Acid treatment involves the use of acidic solutions to modify the titanium surface, removing contaminants and creating a roughened topography. Acid treatment increases surface energy, promoting cell adhesion and osseointegration[4].

### **2.2 Surface Coating:**

Surface coatings with bioactive materials, growth factors, or antimicrobial agents have been explored to improve the biological response of titanium implants. These coatings can enhance osteoblast activity, reduce bacterial adhesion, and prevent infection[5].

## **3. Biological Surface Modifications:**

### **3.1 Protein Immobilization:**

Protein immobilization techniques involve the attachment of bioactive proteins, such as bone morphogenetic proteins (BMPs), to the titanium surface. This stimulates cell signaling pathways, accelerating bone regeneration and osseointegration[6].

### **3.2 Cell Seeding:**

Cell seeding techniques involve the attachment of osteogenic cells, such as mesenchymal stem cells (MSCs), onto the titanium surface before implantation. Cell-seeded implants have shown improved bone formation and integration[7].

## **4. Antimicrobial Properties:**

The antimicrobial properties of dental implants are crucial for preventing bacterial colonization, biofilm formation, and subsequent peri-implantitis. Titanium's inherent resistance to microbial adhesion is attributed to its oxide layer, which rapidly forms upon exposure to air, known as titanium dioxide (TiO<sub>2</sub>). TiO<sub>2</sub> exhibits photocatalytic properties when exposed to UV light, generating reactive oxygen species (ROS) that have antimicrobial effects against a wide range of bacteria, including Gram-positive and Gram-negative strains[8].

Biofilm-associated infections represent a medical and surgical challenge by the destruction of the adjacent tissue leading to poor vascularization, implant loosening, detachment, or even dislocations[9]. Bacteria adhere to surfaces with the help of a continuously maturing biofilm. Stage I shows rapid and reversible initial interaction between the bacterial cell surfaces and material surfaces, while in stage II, there is specific and non-specific interactions happening between proteins on the bacterial surface structures, namely fimbriae or pili, and binding molecules on the surface of the material.

Material deterioration and the spread of pathogens can both be prevented by the prevention of biofilm formation by the elaboration of antimicrobial surfaces. Thus, materials must prevent the primary adhesion of living planktonic microbial cells from their environment. Achievement of the above can be done via repelling or killing of the approaching bacteria.

Additionally, surface modifications, such as nanotexturing, have been explored to enhance the antimicrobial potential of titanium implants. Nanotextured surfaces exhibit increased surface area and altered surface energy, which can disrupt bacterial adhesion and colonization[10]. Furthermore, incorporating antimicrobial agents, such as silver nanoparticles or antimicrobial peptides, into the titanium surface has shown promising results in reducing bacterial adhesion and biofilm formation[11].

## **5. Surface Topography:**

Titanium's surface topography plays a crucial role in osseointegration, the process by which bone integrates with the implant surface. Micro- and nano-scale features on the implant surface influence cellular responses and protein adsorption, affecting osteoblast activity and bone formation. Studies have shown that certain surface topographies, such as moderately rough or nanostructured surfaces, promote enhanced osseointegration compared to smooth surfaces [12]. On the macro scale, the use of 3D printing and laser surface texturing is used to create irregularities and pores on the titanium substrate surface, thereby increasing the bone-implant contact and consequently, osseointegration[15].

Advanced surface modification techniques, including sandblasting, acid etching, anodization, and laser treatment, are employed to create controlled surface topographies on titanium implants. These methods optimize surface

roughness and energy, facilitating improved osteogenic responses and accelerating bone healing around the implant[ 2].

The micro-scale titanium implant surface modifications include sand-blasting, grit-blasting & acid etching.

Grit-blasting has been a reliable method to induce surface roughness in which the hard ceramic particles are ejected by compressed air at a high velocity through a nozzle. The surface roughness mainly depends on the size of the ceramic particles, ranging from 110 to 250 microns. It is imperative that the ceramic particles should have characterizations of stability and biocompatibility, thus not affecting the ingrowth of bone cells in the titanium implants. The abrasive particles that are usually used are of aluminum oxide (Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>), silicon oxide (SiO<sub>2</sub>), titanium oxide (TiO<sub>2</sub>), and calcium phosphate composition.

Acid-etching is a procedure in which titanium implant surfaces are roughened with strong acid solutions, namely hydrochloric acid (HCl), nitric acid (HNO<sub>3</sub>), sulfuric acid (H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>), hydrofluoric acid (HF), and other combined acid solutions. For instance, the purpose of acid-etching processing mostly is for removing the residual particles remaining from the previous grit-blasting processes on the implant surfaces. Also, acid-etching readies the structure of the micro-pits with pit sizes in the range of 0.5–2 microns. [16,17].

The surface treatment employed by the combination of grit-blasting with acid-etching procedures is known as SLA. Experimental studies[18-21] reported that SLA-treated surfaces are beneficial, with increased biocompatibility in the early bone formation stage and also in cell differentiation. There is a positive effect on the activation of blood platelets and cell migration after SLA treatment due to the alteration of the surface topography of titanium implants. Studies[22-25] proved that hydrophilic surfaces can further shorten the osseointegration process. Titanium implants which are treated with SLA and are immersed in isotonic solution at low pH to produce a super-hydrophilic titanium surface. Compared with acid-etching surfaces, the super-hydrophilic surface can increase BIC in 2–4 weeks[26-30]. The various nano-scale surface modifications have been discussed in brief in the next section.

## 6. Anti-Corrosion Properties:

Corrosion resistance is critical for the long-term success of dental implants, as it prevents the release of metal ions into the surrounding tissues, which may trigger adverse reactions and compromise the implant's stability. Titanium, in its native form, possesses excellent corrosion resistance due to the rapid formation of a passive oxide layer upon exposure to oxygen. This layer acts as a barrier against corrosive agents and protects the underlying titanium substrate from degradation[13].

Moreover, various surface treatments, such as plasma spraying, physical vapor deposition, and ion implantation, have been explored to enhance the anti-corrosion properties of titanium implants.

Plasma spraying technology is a physical method, which involves spraying melted coating material onto Ti substrate surfaces using a direct current arc plasma gun, producing a 30-micron thick coating.

It was seen with a study[31] that a three-dimensional topography formation positively had increased the mechanical interlock and tensile strength between the bone in question and implant surfaces. Titanium implants were treated using SLA and they were immersed in isotonic solution at low pH to produce a super-hydrophilic titanium surface.

Li et al.[32] fabricated nano-TiO<sub>2</sub>/Ag and nano-TiO<sub>2</sub> coatings using a plasma-spraying technique on titanium substrates to improve the bioactive and antibacterial properties.

Anodization is a technology to change the roughness and topographic features on the surface of titanium with many influencing variables, such as oxidation duration, oxidation voltage, electrolyte solution type, electrolyte solution concentration and the subsequent heat treatment process. Nanopores and nanotubes can be induced by constant potential anodization in different acid solutions (e.g., H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>, HF, H<sub>3</sub>PO<sub>4</sub>, HNO<sub>3</sub>) for various time spans[33,34]. Compared with machined surfaces, anodized surfaces enhanced the bone response in biomechanical and histomorphometric experiments[35].

The anodized studies in references[34,36] possess nano-scale surfaces, enabling them to load and to deliver multifunctional molecules and growth factors, thus accelerating early bone

integration. The wall thickness, diameter, and length of nanotubes directly depend on the anodization parameters such as oxide temperature, voltage, time, and electrolyte concentration[37]. Nanotubes increase the contact surface area resulting in an increase in wettability and adsorption of proteins and ions[34,38-40].

For instance, loading antibacterial ions on nanotubes can prevent biofilm formation and reduce bacteria in the peri-implant region to avoid early failure of the implant[41-

43].Several experimental studies[44,45] indicated that the length of TiO<sub>2</sub> nanotubes has an influence on biocompatibility, while their diameter has a critical effect on cell adhesion and proliferation. The best osteoconductivity was reported in 70 nm diameter nanotubes, meanwhile, 80 nm diameter nanotubes also showed improved proliferation and differentiation behavior[46-48].

These techniques create a protective coating on the titanium surface, further improving its resistance to corrosion and ion release[49,50].

Table 1. Different types of titanium implant coatings and their antibacterial effects.

Coating Types	Composition	Major Techniques	Antibacterial Efficiency seen In Vitro Studies	References
Inorganic ions/elements	Ag-doped TiO <sub>2</sub>	Plasma Electrolytic Oxidation (PEO)	Significant reduction (p < 0.05) in cell numbers of Escherichia coli and Staphylococcus aureus and their metabolic activity.	Thukkaram M. et al.(2020) [51]
	Ag nanoparticles (Ag NP)-loaded calcium phosphate solution	Plasma Electrolytic Oxidation	High silver content samples showed to have a 6log reduction of S. aureus	Oleshko O. et al.(2020) [52]
	Zn doped HAP	Solution Precursor Plasma Spray (SPPS) process	Antibacterial action against Staphylococcus aureus (strain B 918)	Sergi R. et al.(2018) [53]
	Selenium incorporated onto microporous titanium dioxide coatings with Ca and P on titanium substrates	Micro-arc oxidation (MAO)	Antibacterial action against Escherichia coli and Staphylococcus aureus is evident	Zhou J. et al.(2020) [54]
	Zn/Sr-doped titanium dioxide	Micro-arc oxidation	A minimum of 94% killing potential after 28 days was observed for Escherichia coli and Staphylococcus aureus in in-vitro studies	Zhao Q. et al.(2019) [55]
	Bismuth doped with nanohydroxyapatite	Alkali-thermal treatment	Fewer surviving colonies of Staphylococcus aureus was observed in spread plate analysis	Ciobanu G. et al.(2019) [56]
	Samarium and Strontium on TiO <sub>2</sub> nanotubes	Anodization	Large zone of inhibition was being seen for Escherichia coli and Staphylococcus aureus	Zhang X. et al.(2020) [57]

		Zone of inhibition evident; was larger for Staphylococcus aureus than Escherichia coli.	
TiO <sub>2</sub> nanotubes doped with gallium	Anodization solvent casting	Low concentration of live Staphylococcus aureus and Escherichia coli was observed in Live/Dead cell assay	Dong J. et al.[58] (2019)
Ag-HAP-fluoride	Sol-gel	96% reduction in Escherichia coli was observed after 6 h in spread plate results for Ag—HAP-fluoride coating which had 0.3%w/v of Ag and P/F ratio of 6	Batebi K. et al.[59] (2018)
ZnO-HAP	Spin coating	Drastic reduction in the colonies of Escherichia coli and Staphylococcus aureus was seen after 4 h of incubation	Ohtsu N. et al.[60] (2018)
Niobium doped with hydroxyapatite	Microwave irradiation done	A large zone of inhibition was seen for Escherichia coli and Bacillus subtilis	Panda S. et al.[61] (2022)
Cerium incorporated collagen-HAP	Immersion of the titanium substrate in supersaturated calcification solution (Ce-SCS)	After 24 h incubation 92.61% Escherichia coli and 73.59% Staphylococcus aureus were observed to be eradicated	Ciobanu G. et al.[62] (2018)
Calcium Titanate Iodine coating	Solution and heat treatment method that controllably incorporates 0.7% to 10.5% of Iodine into Titanium	About 99% of bactericidal activity was seen for Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus, Staphylococcus aureus, Escherichia coli and Staphylococcus epidermidis	Yamaguchi S. et al.[63] (2021)
TiN and SiC coating	Magnetron sputtering, Plasma enhanced chemical vapor deposition system (PECVD)	Reduction was seen in number of live Porphyromonas gingivalis was observed after 4 h of incubation.	S.E.A. et al.[64] (2020)
Gentamicin loaded zinc-incorporated Halloysites (ZnHNTs)-Chitosan	Electrodeposition (EPD)	Inhibition zones of 3.11 ± 0.79 cm <sup>2</sup> /unit area of the sample was seen in disc diffusion assay for Staphylococcus aureus	Humayun A. et al.[65] (2020)

	Gentamicin and Layer-by-layer polyacrylic acid (PAA) assembly	About 99% of bactericidal activity was seen present for Staphylococcus aureus and Escherichia coli	He - L. J. et al.[66] (2020)	
	Chitosan/cefazolin	Electrophoretic deposition	Nearly 100% bactericidal activity against Escherichia coli was shown by the coating which had the highest drug concentration	Chen S. -T. et al.[67] (2021)
Antibiotic based	Levofloxacin loaded graphene coating	Sandblasting done with large grit with acid-etching and salinization also done	Here large bacteriostatic circle diameters were seen for Staphylococcus aureus and Escherichia coli	Sun J. et al.[68] (2021)
	Chitosan here was coated with a thin layer of melittin and Spin coating and loaded with the casting method was followed	antibiotics namely vancomycin and Oxacillin	It was observed that the coatings were able to eradicate Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) and Vancomycin - Resistant Staphylococcus aureus (VRSA) at the early stages	Zarghami V. [69] et al. (2021)
	poly L lysine (PLL)/sodium alginate (SA)/Silver nanoparticles	Electrostatic self assembly, dip coating	A distinct ring was seen in zone of inhibition test for Staphylococcus aureus and Staphylococcus mutans	Guo C. et al.[70] (2020)
	N-halamine based porous coating (Ti - treatment,	Alkali-heat surface	Bactericidal rate of 96% for Staphylococcus aureus and	Wu S. et al.[71] (2021)
	PAA-NCI)	grafting and functionalization	NCI - 91% Porphyromonas gingivalis was observed in contact killing assay	
	Diethyl phosphite (DEP) coated titanium (pp (DEP)-Ti)	Plasma polymerization	The number of Staphylococcus aureus and Candida albicans colonies decreased after 24 h	Kaleli-Can[72] G. et al.(2020)
	Phosphonate active ester copolymers (pDEMMP-b-pNHSMa) and PHMB	and Reversible addition block fragmentation transfer (RAFT) polymerization was observed.	Nearly 100% antibacterial activity was observed for Staphylococcus aureus and Escherichia coli	Peng J. et al.[73] (2021)
	A recombinant elastin - like peptide coating with adhesive sequences covalently attached AMP observed, RRP9W 4	cell - Covalent RGD immobilization with aAMPs to titanium surface	The number of dead Staphylococcus aureus and Pseudomonas aeruginosa cells increased after 48 h	Atefyekta S.[74] et al(2019)

Antimicrobial Peptide based	RRP9W4N incorporated into Spin-coating mesoporous TiO <sub>2</sub> .	Bactericidal action was seen against Staphylococcus epidermidis	Pihl M. et[75] al.(2021)	
	Pectolite nanorod (NCS) with AMP-loaded collagen shell	Microarc oxidation (MAO), Spin coating	Contact killing efficiency was almost 100% for Staphylococcus aureus	Zhang L. et[76] al.(2021)
	poly (quaternary ammonium salts - co - methacrylic acid) and (PQA)	Anodic Oxidation and Spray coating	Efficient antibacterial action was seen against Escherichia coli and Staphylococcus aureus	Lin J. et[77] al.(2021)
Multifunctional Coatings	P (vinylcaprolactam (VCL)-co-polyethylene glycol methacrylate (PEGMA)-co-alkyl-dimethyl tertiary amine (QAS)-co-vinyltrimethoxysilane (VTMO)) copolymer/ TiO <sub>2</sub> nanotube	Layer-by-layer (LbL) self-assembly method	Antibacterial action was seen at lower pH for Staphylococcus aureus and Escherichia coli	Zhang F. et[78] al.(2022)
	Nano amorphous calcium phosphate (ACP) and titanium dioxide with chitosan oligosaccharide lactatedone. (ChOL) was used.	Anodization and titanium anaphoretic electrodeposition was done.	Evidence of reduction by three -to- and four-fold in the number of Staphylococcus aureus and Pseudomonas aeruginosa colonies was seen after 420 min	Pavlović M.R.P. et[79] al.(2021)
	poly (methacrylic acid) (PMAA) loaded onto TiO <sub>2</sub> nanotubes (Ti - NTs) with HHC36 peptides, with a sequence of KRWWKWWRR	Anodization	99% of bactericidal activity was seen for Staphylococcus aureus, Escherichia coli, Pseudomonas aeruginosa Methicillin - resistant Staphylococcus aureus	Chen J. et[80] al.(2020)
	Yb and Er doped Ti nano - shovel/ quercetin/L- arginine (TiO <sub>2</sub> /UCN/Qr/LA)	Phototherapy	Above 90% bactericidal action against Staphylococcus aureus was observed	Zhang G. et[81] al.(2021)

### Conclusion:

Surface modifications of titanium implants have emerged as a critical aspect of implantology, with the potential to significantly enhance implant performance and clinical outcomes. Various physical, chemical, and biological surface modification techniques have been developed to optimize osseointegration, antimicrobial properties, and corrosion resistance. The choice of surface modification technique depends on the specific application and desired outcomes. Further research and clinical studies are warranted to fully understand the long-term effects and benefits of these surface modifications for titanium implants.

Titanium has demonstrated exceptional performance as a dental implant biomaterial, owing to its unique combination of antimicrobial properties, surface topography optimization, and inherent anti-corrosion behavior. The ability of titanium implants to resist microbial colonization, promote osseointegration, and prevent corrosion contributes significantly to their high success rates and favorable long-term clinical outcomes.

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