



# Crowns: Indications, types, and how they are placed

## Crowns

At your clinical examination, the dentist suggested that the proper means of restoring your tooth was a crown. The reasons for making that suggestion can vary from case to case. Some of the indications for a crown are:

1. A previously filled tooth where there now exists more filling than tooth. The existing tooth structure becomes weakened and can no longer support the filling.
2. Extensive damage by decay.
3. Discolouration and compromised aesthetics.
4. Fractures
5. Root canal - After root canal, teeth tend to become brittle and are more apt to fracture. They therefore need to be protected by a crown.
6. Bridges - When missing teeth are replaced with a bridge, the adjacent teeth require crowns in order to support the replacement teeth.

Crowns strengthen and protect the remaining tooth structure and can improve the appearance of your teeth. Crowns can be made from different materials, which include the full porcelain crown, the porcelain fused-to-metal crown and the all-metal crown. Your dentist will recommend which type is more appropriate, depending upon the strength requirements and aesthetic concerns of the tooth involved.

Fitting a crown requires at least two appointments. During your first visit, the tooth is prepared for the crown, an impression or mould is made of the tooth, and a temporary crown is placed over the prepared tooth. At the subsequent visit, the temporary crown is removed and the final crown is fitted, adjusted and cemented into place.

### FIRST VISIT

The first visit usually begins by giving you a local anaesthetic. Depending upon the type of local anaesthetic used, you can expect to be numb for one to two hours. If your anaesthesia should last longer, do not be concerned. Not everyone reacts to medication in the same manner. **One word of caution** : While you are numb, please be careful not to bite your lip or tongue. A soft diet or no meal at all while you are numb is probably a good idea.

Once you are numb, the dentist will prepare your tooth in a very specific way in order to maximize the retention and aesthetics of your new porcelain to metal crown. After the tooth is fully prepared, we proceed with the impression stage.

Once the impression stage is completed, the dentist will place a temporary (*transitional*) crown (*or bridge if multiple teeth were involved*) on your tooth. These plastic (*acrylic*) restorations are placed on teeth to protect them and the gum tissues between dental visits. The temporary cementing medium used is designed to allow the easy removal of the temporary at your next scheduled visit.

Should you experience any discomfort following your appointment you can take a mild analgesic (*Panadol®*, *Panadeine®*, *Nurofen®*, *Paracetamol®* etc.) as long as there is no medical contraindication based upon your medical history. Typically, you can take anything you would normally take for a headache. If the discomfort persists, please call the dentist.

There are a couple of additional facts you should know about regarding the care of your temporary crown:

- Home care is extremely important while your temporary crown is in place. *The health of your gum tissue and the success of your final treatment restoration depends upon it.* PLEASE do not be afraid to clean your teeth between visits. With a minimal

amount of home care, you should be able to maintain the continued health of your teeth and gum tissue during the time required to fabricate your new crown.

- Sometimes, even with meticulous care, temporary crowns or bridges may become loose between visits. Put the crown in a safe place and call the surgery. We can arrange to recement it for you.

## **SECOND VISIT**

At this appointment, the temporary crown is removed and any temporary cement is cleaned from the prepared tooth. The dentist will fit the final crown, check for accuracy, adjust for any bite discrepancies and evaluate the aesthetics. If all of these factors are acceptable, the crown is cemented to your tooth. It is not unusual for the new crown to be mildly sensitive to cold temperatures for a few weeks. However, if the sensitivity is severe, does not subside, or if the bite feels uncomfortable, contact the dentist. Further adjustments to the crown may be necessary.

We hope that this brief instruction sheet has covered most of your questions regarding crowns.