

## CROWNS OR BRIDGES

There are many reasons to “cap” or crown a tooth, as it is correctly termed. The most common reason is to provide strength to a tooth that is at serious risk of fracture. This may be due to large fillings, decay, a crack in the tooth, or a tooth that has had root canal therapy. Additionally, crowns may be placed to improve the appearance of chipped, stained, or crooked teeth if it is not possible to use tooth whitening bonding or veneering. Bridges are essentially a crown on either side of a space, joined with an artificial tooth to fill the gap. Crowns and bridges cannot be easily removed once they are cemented.

### WHAT IS A CROWN?

Crowns are of three main types, with subtle but different pros and cons for each.

AS A ROUGH GUIDE, THE THREE TYPES ARE:

- ▶ **METAL FREE CROWNS.** These look beautiful and can be used in all areas.
- ▶ **PORCELAIN BONDED TO METAL.** These also look very natural and are stronger than the all porcelain crowns.
- ▶ **GOLD.** These are the most ideal but are only used where appearance is not critical (i.e. back teeth)

### A BRIDGE CAN BE MADE OF ALL TYPES

The cost of crowns and bridges may seem high in the short term, but they are sophisticated and time consuming to produce and all the materials involved are costly. The advantage is that they are very strong and, if well cared for, are the longest lasting restoration, thus justifying the initial investment.

### HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?

The average life of a crown is around 10 yrs to as long as 20 yrs, with gold crowns lasting the longest. Bridges last similar times, although longer bridges have a greater chance of failure. The main factor that determines how long a crown or bridge will last is how well you look after

it. Crowns and bridges fail mainly due to gum disease and decay. Both of these are preventable by keeping your mouth meticulously plaque free and seeing your dentist for regular examinations and your hygienist for thorough oral hygiene instruction and treatment.

We will help you by explaining specifically how to clean around difficult areas of your crowns and bridges. If this is done, it is certainly possible for your crowns and bridges to last much longer than average.

Another common reason for crowns and bridges to fail is when a root canal treatment fails or if the patient has bitten into something very hard and causes a fracture on the tooth or root.

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### WHAT TO EXPECT

#### Visit 1

In most cases the tooth or teeth are first numbed with local anaesthetic. The tooth is then shaped to allow for the thickness of the crown or bridge to be made. In many ways you may think of it as having the damaged natural covering of enamel replaced with a new synthetic covering. A 3D scan or impression is taken of the prepared tooth or teeth and sent to a special dental laboratory, which will construct the crown or bridge to your dentists prescription. Before you leave, a temporary crown or bridge will be fitted to protect the exposed tooth and maintain appearance and function. This temporary does not resemble the final shape, feel or colour of the final restoration unless you are having

multiple crowns for a smile design procedure (ask for porcelain veneer information).

## HOW TO LOOK AFTER YOUR TEMPORARY CROWN:

- ▶ The temporary crown or bridge is not strong so avoid hard or sticky foods.
- ▶ You should brush around the temporary, but DO NOT floss as this may dislodge it.
- ▶ If the temporary should break or come off, please call us immediately (that day)! If you do not, then the tooth can move so that the final crown does not fit. Additionally, even if the temporary is broken, bring it with you as this makes it easier to make a new temporary crown or bridge.

It is important in the first 24 hours to avoid hard or sticky foods.

### Visit 2 (usually 2 weeks later)

At the next visit the temporary is removed and the new crown or bridge is tried on the tooth. After your dentist has checked it they may ask you to have a look yourself. If you have any reservations at all about colour, shape,

“You should brush around the temporary crown, but DO NOT floss as this may dislodge it.”

If you have any further concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us.

size, or any other factor, be sure to speak up now as the crown(s) can be sent back to the lab for adjustment.

## CARING FOR YOUR NEW CROWN OR BRIDGE:

- ▶ It is important in the first 24 hours to avoid hard or sticky foods.
- ▶ These types of restorations are very strong but can still break if they are abused. Avoid chewing very sticky foods, ice, pens or other hard objects.
- ▶ Don't worry about mild sensitivity to hot or cold foods. It will disappear gradually over a few weeks. Infrequency, sensitivity lasts longer than six. Contact us if this occurs.
- ▶ As already mentioned the best way to keep these restorations for as long as possible is with regular care. This includes your regular examinations and careful cleaning at home.

Sensitivity of a temporary crown to cold, hot or sweet is not uncommon. If this occurs and is more than a minor irritation, please give us a call.

Visit the website of our main cosmetic laboratory, Amdecc, for a glimpse of what results can be achieved at The Essex Smile Centre. We work closely with Rob Storrar who created Amdecc and has made it into a globally successful Cosmetic Dental Laboratory.

[WWW.AMDECC.COM](http://WWW.AMDECC.COM)