

Crowns

Q1. What is a crown?

A1. A crown is a tooth shaped restoration or “cap” that fits over the top of a prepared tooth.

Q2. Why do I need a crown?

A2. There are a number of possible reasons as to why you need a crown.

Firstly it may be needed to restore a damaged tooth or replace a large filling. Typically crowns are used to replace large fillings if there is not enough tooth left for a filling to hold onto.

Secondly, a crown may be needed to protect and support a tooth that has had root canal treatment. Sometimes crowns can be used to improve the appearance of your teeth if you for instance have discoloured fillings or if teeth are misshaped, malformed, crooked, uneven and/or crowded.

Lastly, crowns can be used to help holding dentures and bridges in place.

Q3. How long does the treatment take?

A3. You will require at least 2 appointments that are between 1-2 weeks apart.

The first appointment is for the preparation, an impression, taking the shade and placing a temporary restoration.

The second appointment is to fit the permanent crown.

The entire procedure takes approximately 1 hour.

Q4. What does the procedure involve?

A4. To begin with your dentist will prepare the tooth by removing the outer surface. The thickness of the crown will match the amount of tooth that is removed. Once the tooth has been shaped they will take an impression to ensure that the crown is made to a perfect fit. This impression will be sent away to the dental laboratory for the crown to be made. You will be fitted with a temporary crown or restoration to protect your tooth until your second appointment.

At the next appointment they will make sure the colour and appearance of the crown is right before finally fixing it to the tooth by using a dental cement or adhesive.

Q5. What is a post crown?

A5. In certain circumstances, such as in root filled teeth, it may be necessary to have a post put into the tooth before attaching a crown. This is to provide extra support for the crown

and helps to keep it in place. The post is cemented directly into the root canal before the crown is attached.

Q6. How long will it last?

A6. With appropriate care a crown can last for many years.

It is very important to clean and brush where the crown meets the tooth, along the gum margins as it is the critical area where the tooth can become decayed. You need to look after the crown as well as your own teeth so it will last longer.

Q7. Will it feel any different after having the crown fitted?

A7. The crown won't be exactly the same shape as your original tooth so it may take a while to get used to it. After a few days it should start to feel normal and you won't be aware of any change. If it does not feel comfortable when you bite then it may be necessary for your dentist to adjust it slightly.

Q8. What will the crown be made of?

A8. There are a variety of options available;

- Porcelain bonded to precious or non-precious metal
- Precious or non-precious gold alloy or metal,
- All-ceramic,
- Porcelain,
- Composite,
- Glass

Each type of crown has different advantages and disadvantages, for instance some materials are stronger than others whereas others are more natural in appearance.

Depending on what your priorities are you can choose a more expensive crown that is stronger and with nicer aesthetics. To find the best option for you we recommend that you discuss it with your dentist.

Q9. Will it affect the appearance of my teeth?

A9. The aim is to make the crown look just like a normal tooth, especially in the front, and as such they are made to match the colour of the rest of your teeth. Crowns at the back are mostly made to be strong to resist the biting forces.

The temporary crown may be a little more noticeable but it is only there for a short time until your custom made crown is ready.

Q10. Is it painful?

A10. No, you would be given local anaesthetic before they start preparing your tooth for the crown so it should feel just like having a filling. If the tooth has been root canal treated then it may not be necessary to have local anaesthetic as the nerves have been removed.

Q11. Is there an alternative treatment?

A11. Depending on how much tooth is remaining you may be able to have an inlay or an onlay which are very much like crowns but they don't cover the whole tooth. If it is a front tooth you may be able to have a veneer instead but once again this doesn't cover the entire tooth, it just covers the front surface and will not be as strong as a crown. If there is too little remaining of your natural tooth then it might not be possible to restore and you may need to have the tooth extracted.