



D R . L A U R A F O X
FAMILY DENTISTRY

Crowns and Bridges

WHAT IS A CROWN?

A crown (sometimes called a “cap”) is a protective covering that is placed over the top of a tooth.

Why do I need a crown?

The three most common reasons for needing a crown are:

1. A cracked or broken tooth
2. A tooth with a large filling
3. To improve the appearance of a tooth

Cracked or broken teeth:

Sometimes when teeth break, they can be repaired with a simple filling. However, if the fracture involves a large piece of the tooth, a crown may be needed to improve the strength and function of the tooth.

Large fillings:

When teeth have been restored with large fillings, they may be at risk for fracturing. A crown can protect a tooth from fracturing.

Appearance:

Porcelain crowns can be used to improve the colour or shape of teeth to create a more pleasing and confident smile.

What is involved in making a crown?

Crowns require two appointments, approximately 2 weeks apart. At the first visit, local anaesthesia (freezing) is administered. The tooth is reshaped to make room for the crown to fit precisely over the tooth to meet the gumline and fit with the patient’s bite. A mould is made of the prepared tooth and is sent to a dental laboratory where the final crown is fabricated. An acrylic temporary crown is placed over the tooth to protect it until the next visit.

At the second appointment, the temporary crown is removed and the permanent crown is cemented in place. Typically there is no freezing required for this visit.

WHAT IS A BRIDGE?

A bridge is a way to replace one or more missing teeth. It is comprised of one or more replacement teeth attached to the natural teeth next to them. It is cemented permanently in place and is shaped to allow you to clean underneath it in order to keep the supporting teeth healthy.

Why replace missing teeth?

It is important to replace missing teeth to improve chewing, appearance and to keep the teeth, gums and jaws healthy. When a tooth is lost, the teeth around it may shift out of place. This changes the way your teeth fit together, which can cause jaw soreness and/or make the area harder to keep clean. This can, in turn, lead to tooth decay and gum disease. Spacing and shifting of teeth can also affect the appearance of your smile.

What is involved in making a bridge?

Bridges require two appointments, approximately 2 weeks apart. At the first visit, the supporting teeth are reshaped to make room for the bridge to fit precisely over the teeth to meet the gumline and fit with the patient's bite. A mould is made of the prepared teeth and is sent to a dental laboratory where the bridge is fabricated. An acrylic temporary bridge is placed over the teeth to protect them until the next visit.

At the second appointment, the temporary bridge is removed and the permanent bridge is cemented in place. Typically there is no freezing required for this visit.

Do insurance companies pay for crowns and bridges?

Depending on the insurance plan your employer has selected, you may have partial or complete coverage for the cost of your crown or bridge. These treatments are considered under the category of "Major" procedures in your insurance booklet. If your plan has provisions for crowns or bridges, most commonly the insurance company will pay 50% of the cost of the procedure; although some plans cover as much as 80% or 100%. An estimate or pre-determination can be submitted on your behalf to find out about your insurance coverage.