

What are Tooth Bridges ?

What are Dental Crowns and Tooth Bridges?

Both crowns and most bridges are fixed prosthetic devices. Unlike removable devices such as dentures, which you can take out and clean daily, crowns and bridges are cemented onto existing teeth or implants, and can only be removed by a dentist.

How do Bridges Work?

A bridge may be recommended if you're missing one or more teeth. Gaps left by missing teeth eventually cause the remaining teeth to rotate or shift into the empty spaces, resulting in a bad [bite](#). The imbalance caused by missing teeth can also lead to [gum disease](#) and temporomandibular joint (TMJ) disorders.

Bridges are commonly used to replace one or more missing teeth. They span the space where the teeth are missing. Bridges are cemented to the natural teeth or implants surrounding the empty space. These teeth, called abutments, serve as anchors for the bridge. A replacement tooth, called a pontic, is attached to the crowns that cover the abutments. As with crowns, you have a choice of materials for bridges. Your dentist can help you decide which to use, based on the location of the missing tooth (or teeth), its function, aesthetic considerations and cost. Porcelain or ceramic bridges can be matched to the color of your natural teeth.

Bridges



Teeth around the space are prepared.



The bridge is mounted and adjusted for fit and comfort.



The bridge is cemented into position.

How are Crowns and Bridges Made?

Before either a crown or a bridge can be made, the tooth (or teeth) must be reduced in size so that the crown or bridge will fit over it properly. After reducing the tooth/teeth, your dentist will take an [impression](#) to provide an exact mold for the crown or bridge. If porcelain is to be used, your dentist will determine the correct shade for the crown or bridge to match the color of your existing teeth.

Using this impression, a dental lab then makes your crown or bridge, in the material your dentist specifies. A [temporary crown](#) or bridge will be put in place to cover the prepared tooth while the permanent crown or bridge is being made. When the permanent crown or bridge is ready, the temporary crown or bridge is removed, and the new crown or bridge is cemented over your prepared tooth or teeth.

How Long do Crowns and Bridges Last?

While crowns and bridges can last a lifetime, they do sometimes come loose or fall out. The most important step you can take to ensure the longevity of your crown or bridge is to practice good [oral hygiene](#). A bridge can lose its support if the teeth or bone holding it in place are damaged by dental disease. Keep your [gums](#) and teeth healthy by [Brushing](#) with [fluoride](#) toothpaste twice a day and [flossing](#) daily. Also see your dentist and [hygienist](#) regularly for checkups and professional cleanings.

To prevent damage to your new crown or bridge, avoid chewing hard foods, ice or other hard objects.