

## Crowns, Bridges & Veneers

If you have one or more missing teeth, your dental professional may recommend that you get artificial replacements. There are removable options like dentures that you can take out and clean, but those can slide around, shift, or fall out – which understandably won't fly for many people. And that's why there are crowns affixed to dental implants and bridges which function more like your actual teeth. But between crown implants and bridges, which option is the best choice for you? We'll break down the similarities, differences, advantages, and disadvantages between these two fixed artificial tooth options so that even if you have a fake tooth or two, you'll have a smile that's as real as can be.

### What's the Difference Between Dental Crowns and Dental Bridges?

A dental crown can cap an individual's damaged or decaying tooth or be placed on top of a dental implant to replace a missing tooth. Dental implants are metal fixtures, surgically fastened to your jawbone below the gums. These metal implants become anchored to your bone through osseointegration (the bone fuses to the metal). This process provides stable support you can rely on while eating and speaking. The healing process after getting an implant can take 6-12 weeks. Your dental professional will then place a metal post (or abutment) into your implant, onto which they will mount your crown.

Bridges, on the other hand, are solely used to replace missing teeth. They have two crowns – one on either end – and a bridge of replacement teeth that rest in the area of the gums where there is tooth loss. The crowns at the ends of a bridge can fuse to existing teeth (that need to be filed down by a dental professional to fit correctly), or your dental professional can attach them to dental implants.

Whichever of these replacement tooth options is best for you – they can be vital in maintaining your oral health. Gaps in areas of loss can cause your other teeth to begin rotating or shifting into the empty spaces, resulting in a bad bite. And missing teeth can even lead to gum disease and temporomandibular joint (TMJ) disorders.

### How do Crowns Work?

When a crown caps a damaged, weak, or decaying tooth, it's generally to help maintain its size, strength, shape, and appearance. If you're missing a tooth, a dental professional will give you a dental implant, on top of which they will place your crown.

Your crown will be made from one, or a mixture, of various materials. Gold alloy and other metal alloy options tend to be durable and cost-effective, but they won't look much like your other teeth. Porcelain, acrylic, and ceramic crowns can more closely match your natural teeth. Acrylic and ceramic options are known to be durable. Porcelain is a bit more prone to chipping and damage, but porcelain bonded to a metal shell can increase its strength while maintaining its attractive tooth-like aesthetic.

Learn about the four different types of dental crowns.

### How do Bridges Work?

Whereas crowns can repair damaged teeth, a bridge's sole function is to replace one or more missing teeth. For a bridge, your dental professional will place caps on filed-down teeth or dental implants at the outer edges of your area of loss. Replacement teeth (called pontics) span the space between the caps where the teeth are missing.

Just like with dental crowns, you have a choice of materials available to you for your bridge. Your dental professional is in the best position to advise you in your material choice base on your individual needs. However, you'll both want to consider and discuss multiple factors like the visibility of the tooth, the cost, the strength, and how it looks.

### How are Crowns Made?

If you're getting a crown for a damaged or decayed tooth, your dental professional will make an impression of your bite. From that model, they will be able to determine the best shape for your new tooth. Often, the model for your bite needs to be sent to a lab where they will create your crown, which can take a few weeks. Some dental offices can make crowns in their offices depending on the material you choose and whether they have the required equipment.

### How are Bridges Made?

Before your dental professional can have your bridge made, the teeth at the outer edges of the area of loss will be reduced in size so that your bridge will fit on them properly – unless, of course, they place the bridge on implants. Like with a crown, your dental professional will then take an impression to provide an exact mold for the bridge.

Using this impression, your dental office will either create your bridge in-office or send the model to a dental lab. Your dental professional will use temporary crowns or bridges to cover the prepared teeth while the lab makes your bridge.

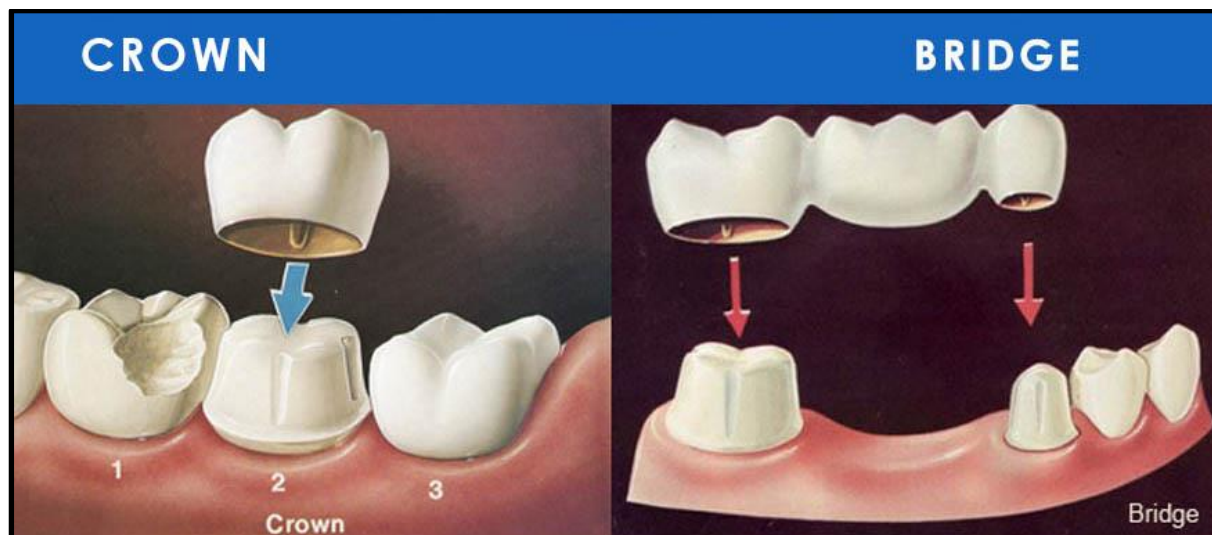
### How Long do Crowns and Bridges Last?

Sometimes crowns and bridges can become loose or fall out from the damage caused by chewing hard foods, ice, or other hard objects. Dental disease that causes tooth or bone loss is another reason crowns or bridges may loosen over time.

By practicing good oral hygiene, however, crowns and bridges can last a lifetime. Brush at least twice a day, floss or clean between your teeth with interdental brushes or water flossers at least once a day, and consider using other helpful products like antimicrobial mouth rinses and tongue scrapers. Be sure to see your dental professional for regular cleanings – not only to keep your teeth pearly white

and bacteria-free but also to check the health of your crown or your bridge. Whether you and your dentist decide on a crown or a bridge for your replacements, we hope your new teeth make you smile.

## Crown & Bridges



# Practice in the Park

## Veneers

# Dental Surgery

Dental veneers are a long-lasting cosmetic solution to imperfect teeth. They can match the colour of your existing teeth and look very natural.

A veneer is a thin moulding, custom-made from porcelain, which is bonded to the front surface of a tooth. Veneers are a quick and effective solution to stained, chipped, misshapen or crooked teeth. They can also be used to cover gaps in teeth where orthodontic treatment may not be suitable.

Veneers are a cosmetic treatment. They cover only the front surface of the tooth and will mimic the size, shape and colour of your teeth, creating a very natural look. A precise shade of porcelain can be chosen to give the right colour to improve a single discoloured tooth or to lighten your front teeth.

### What are the benefits of veneers?

Veneers provide a very natural finish. If you are concerned about misshapen, chipped or discoloured teeth, veneers can offer a long-lasting cosmetic solution.

The colour of the porcelain veneer can be selected to match your existing teeth or to make them appear whiter. The porcelain finish also mimics the light-reflecting qualities of natural teeth, helping you achieve a brighter, natural-looking smile.

Porcelain veneers are also more stain resistant and durable than composite bonding, and if looked after properly, can last for many years.

Veneers offer a gentler approach to altering a tooth's shape or colour than crowns, as only a small amount of enamel has to be removed to fit the veneer. Yet they offer similar strength and very natural looking results.

### What are the downsides of having veneers?

Veneers are considered a long-term solution to imperfect teeth, once you've had them fitted, it's an irreversible procedure. It can take a few weeks to get used to the new feel of having dental veneers.

Your dentist will need to change the structure and shape of your teeth to apply the veneers and remove the outer layer of enamel.

In some cases patients can also experience increased sensitivity after having veneers fitted.

### What are the alternatives to veneers?

Alternative options to veneers are:

- **Composite bonding** - bonding is a fast, non-invasive procedure which can usually be completed in a single appointment. A composite resin is attached to the tooth to restore its natural shape and colour.
- **Crowns** - a crown is a tooth-shaped cap that's placed over the entire visible portion of your tooth. A crown will feel and function just like any of your other teeth. And if you choose to have a porcelain crown, it will be virtually indistinguishable from your other teeth.
- **Orthodontics** - fixed or removable braces can be used to straighten misaligned teeth and close gaps. Advances in orthodontics mean that braces can now be virtually invisible.

### How are veneers fitted?

You'll first have a consultation with your dentist to make sure a veneer is the correct treatment for you. Once this has been agreed, your tooth can be prepared to hold the veneer. This involves taking off a thin layer of the enamel so that the veneer can be attached to your tooth seamlessly, without changing the size of the tooth. You might be given a local anaesthetic as a precaution, but the procedure shouldn't cause you pain.

Your dentist will then take an impression of your mouth so that a bespoke veneer can be created to fit your tooth perfectly. A temporary cover may be placed over your tooth while this is being prepared.

The veneer will then be attached to your tooth and adjusted as necessary, before being permanently secured in place. You'll need to care for your new veneer in the same way you would your other teeth.

With proper care, veneers can last for years, but they can be replaced should any damage occur.

How do I care for my veneers?

After the procedure, your gums may feel a little sore. This is normal and will settle down after a few days of careful brushing. Veneers are easy to maintain - they simply require the same care as your other teeth. Regular brushing, flossing, dental check-ups and hygienist appointments will help keep your veneers looking good for years.

## Veneers

