



National Dental  
Centre Singapore

SingHealth

# Crown & Bridges



## What is a crown?

A crown is a cap placed over a tooth and held in place by dental adhesive or cement.

## Why do I need crowns?

Crowns are used for several reasons:

- As a protective cover for badly decayed or fractured teeth
- As a permanent restoration for teeth with large fillings
- To correct minor problems in natural teeth (e.g. spacing, irregular shape, discolouration)



Discoloured tooth before treatment



After treatment with a crown

## What are crowns made of?

Crowns can be made of a variety of materials. They can be made of plastic, ceramic or metal alloys. A combination of metal and ceramic is also possible to maximise strength and simulate the appearance of natural teeth.

## How are crowns made?

Firstly, a thorough clinical examination is conducted with radiographs by the dentist. The suitability for crowns is assessed and any preparatory work is carried out. Your dentist will also be able to advise on material choices, treatment sequence and any other concerns you may have.

At the second appointment, the teeth to be crowned are prepared. This involves reduction of the tooth size (usually under local anaesthesia) followed by an impression or mould of the prepared tooth. This trimming of the tooth is required to create space for the crown to be fitted. The mould is then sent to a laboratory where skilled technicians will fabricate the crown. Meanwhile, a temporary crown is made and fitted onto the trimmed tooth.

At the third appointment, the temporary crown is removed and the tooth surfaces cleaned. The completed crown is tried on for fit, harmony with the bite and appearance. The crown is finally cemented onto the prepared tooth with dental cement.

## How long do crowns last and how do I care for them?

- Crowns are made of inert materials which do not deteriorate over time. However, the underlying tooth is still prone to decay and gum disease.



Completed crown to be fitted on prepared tooth



Final crown to be fitted on prepared tooth

- Ceramic on the surface may chip or fracture. Avoid chewing excessively hard substances like ice or bones.
- Daily brushing and flossing are essential for good oral health and maintenance of the crown. The most vulnerable portion of the crown is the margin or the junction between tooth and crown.
- Regular check-ups will enable your dentist to detect problems with your crown and recommend necessary treatment.

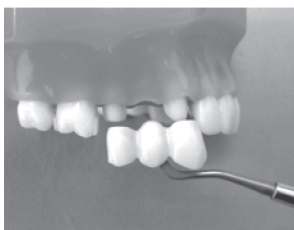
## What is a Bridge?

A bridge replaces missing teeth by using the neighbouring teeth as support structures for an artificial tooth.

The more common types of bridges are:

- Conventional bridge - this consists of two crowns joined to an artificial tooth that is to replace the missing tooth. The healthy neighbouring teeth are trimmed and the bridge unit is fixed onto them.
- Resin-bonded bridge - this requires minimal trimming of neighbouring teeth at their back surfaces. Cement is used to bond the bridge structure to the back of these teeth. Although this method conserves more of the neighbouring teeth's structure, not all patients are suited to it. Your prosthodontist will advise you on the technique most suited for your condition.

Like crowns, bridges are fabricated in a laboratory with the same materials. Maintenance care for bridges is therefore similar to crowns, focusing on regular flossing, brushing as well as check-ups.



Before bridge treatment

After bridge treatment

## Can all missing teeth be replaced by bridges?

Bridges can be used to replace a small number of missing teeth if the neighbouring teeth are sufficiently strong. The number of missing teeth, condition of the neighbouring teeth, condition of the supporting gums and bone are all important factors which need to be assessed by your dentist prior to making a bridge. Your dentist will also be able to advise on alternative methods of replacing missing teeth after a clinical examination.



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