

# What is a crown?

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A crown is an artificial restoration that fits over the remaining part of a prepared tooth, making it strong and giving it the shape of a natural tooth. A crown is sometimes also called a “cap”. Crowns can be used to restore the appearance of a tooth, or to strengthen a broken or heavily filled tooth. The three most important factors of a crown are strength, accurate fit and appearance. Where possible we advise this type of crown as the most advanced type of restoration.

## **Are all crowns the same?**

No. Crowns can be made of several different materials.

## **Porcelain bonded to metal**

This has been the traditional way to produce a tooth-coloured crown. A metal base is made to provide strength and this is coated in a layer of tooth coloured porcelain.

## **All ceramic crowns**

The use of modern ceramic materials offers a metal free alternative, which can give both strength and a more natural colour and less bulky appearance.

## **Gold alloy crowns**

Gold has been used to make crowns for many years. It is very strong and long lasting. Some patients do not like the appearance of gold in their mouth, some do; this is a personal preference.

## **How is a crown prepared?**

The dental surgeon will prepare what is left of the natural tooth to the best possible shape to take the crown. The amount of tooth substance removed will be the same thickness as the new crown. A local anaesthetic will be used when a crown is prepared and it should feel no different from having a filling. The dental surgeon will then take an impression of the prepared tooth and one of the opposite jaw. The way the two jaws bite together will also be recorded.

These impressions will be sent to the dental technician, along with an appropriate shade, prescription and other information required for the crown to be made. It usually takes about two weeks for a crown to be made.

### **What happens to my tooth while I am waiting for my crown?**

The dental surgeon will provide you with a temporary crown to protect the prepared tooth until the new crown is ready. The appearance and function of temporary crowns is not ideal, but remember this is only a temporary measure to last about two weeks.

### **What happens when my new crown is ready?**

You will return for a second appointment and the dental surgeon will remove the temporary crown. He will check the fit and appearance of your new crown and then it will be cemented in place using a dental adhesive.

### **Will the crown feel strange?**

The shape of the crown may be slightly different from your normal tooth, you may be aware of it initially. Within a few days it should feel fine, and you will no longer notice it. The crown may need to be adjusted if your teeth do not feel comfortable when you bite together and you should speak to your dentist if that is the case.

### **What will it cost?**

Prices vary according to the type of crown and material used. Ask your dentists about the different options available and the cost of each.

### **Do crowns need special care?**

The crown itself cannot decay, but decay can start where the edge of the crown joins to the natural tooth. It is very important to keep this area clean to prevent this decay.

### **How long will the crown last?**

How long your crown lasts will depend upon how well you look after it. Immaculate oral hygiene is essential. Properly cared for crowns should last for many years.