

Tooth Talk

**“Hey Doc, my teeth are crooked. I don’t like my smile!
I want straight teeth. What are my options?”**

(Part 3- crown & bridge)

Crown

If you are looking for a cosmetic make-over of your front teeth and the front teeth are either very heavily restored with fillings or are dark due to previous root canal treatments, then crowns may very well be your best choice. A crown, also known as a “cap”, is a tooth-like covering that goes over the tooth and protects it inside. It is indicated in a smile makeover case when there is insufficient tooth structure to support either cosmetic bonding or veneers.



Just like veneers, the dentist will carefully prepare the teeth and an impression is taken. Then, the laboratory will fabricate the crowns on the model according to the colour and the shape of the teeth that the dentist and the patient have decided on. When completed, the dentist will place the crowns on the patient’s teeth to make sure that the result is to the patient’s satisfaction. When the patient is completely satisfied with the look of the new smile, the dentist will then permanently glue the crowns over the teeth.

The indications for crowns are very much the same as for veneers in a cosmetic make-over situation. Crowns can be fabricated to restore broken/chipped/poorly shaped teeth, cover up stained/dicoloured teeth, close diastemas(spaces between teeth), straighten crooked teeth etc. The main benefit of crowns is the protection against further fracture of the teeth.

Bridge

Sometimes, when the front teeth are extremely crooked/crowded and the patient does not want to go through braces, the teeth that are the most out-of-alignment may have to be removed and replaced in order to create a pleasant smile. Under those situations, a bridge can very well be the most appropriate choice to replace the missing teeth and to create a straight, esthetically pleasing set of new front teeth.



A bridge is a dental prosthesis that utilizes the teeth adjacent to the space as anchors to support and replace the missing tooth. Think of a bridge as placing 2 crowns on the teeth next to the space and joining the 2 crowns together with a replacement tooth to fill in the space. Not only does the bridge allow the most crooked teeth to be replaced into a more ideal position, but also it allows the supporting teeth to be reshaped and restored into better alignment and proportion, enhancing the cosmetic outcome of the new smile.



Summary

Both crowns and bridges can last a long, long time if well cared for. Flossing under a bridge is very important in order to avoid developing decay or gum disease under the bridge. Habits such as nail/pencil biting and hard food such as carrots, ice cubes, bones should be avoided if possible to ensure the longevity of these restorations



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