

University Dental Hospital of Manchester
Department of Restorative Dentistry

Information for Patients

Crowns, Veneers and Bridges

Crowns are used to restore teeth which have been weakened by decay, have very large fillings, are worn or broken, or following root canal treatment. Crowns can also be used to improve the appearance of teeth.

A veneer is a thin layer of porcelain or composite made to fit over the front surface of a tooth, like a false fingernail fits over a nail. They are used to improve the shape, size, colour and sometimes position of teeth.

A bridge can be used to replace missing teeth in certain situations, but unlike a denture, it is fixed into the mouth.

How long do they last?

It is important to remember that crowns/bridges/veneers do not last a lifetime. It may be necessary to replace them several times in a lifetime. The average life span of crown and bridgework ranges from five to ten years. Some patients may enjoy their crown and bridgework for twenty or thirty years. The long term prognosis is closely related to the care patients take of their restorations.

Factors that influence how long crowns, veneers and bridges will last include:

- Diet and oral hygiene
- Cleaning with toothbrushes and in between teeth with dental floss or interdental brushes
- Smoking
- Daily wear and tear the patient puts upon their teeth – e.g. grinding teeth.

The other factor that affects the prognosis is the quality and care with which the Dentist performs the crown and bridge procedures. At the Dental Hospital your Consultant will have undergone rigorous training in crown and bridge techniques. Junior staff and students are supervised whilst treatment is carried out.

Are there any risks to having crowns/veneers/bridges?

When you have a crown, a bridge or a veneer, it might be necessary for the dentist to remove some of your tooth surface with a drill, to provide space for restoration to be placed.

As with any dental or medical procedure, there are a few potential problems.

These are listed below:

- A small percentage of teeth receiving crowns/veneers/bridges may require root canal therapy. Most commonly, the need for root canal treatment is determined before permanent cementation of the crown and bridgework. However, symptoms can arise months, or even years later, at which time the root canal can be performed by access through a small hole in the top of the crown or by removing the restoration.
- Patients with thin gums may experience slight recession exposing a darker root surface or the margin of the restoration. This is uncommon, but in a small percentage of cases may occur. It is important to remember that good oral hygiene is essential.
- The gum around your crowns is very sensitive to build up of plaque. It is very important that your oral hygiene is meticulous if you have any crowns/veneers/bridges. If your gums bleed it may indicate a build-up of plaque. This could be due to poor brushing technique, failure to clean under the bridge, failure to clean in between your teeth where a toothbrush can't reach. Your Dentist will be able to give you advice.

Will my crowns/veneers/bridges look good?

Where possible we will try and find the exact match of the material your crown is made of to your natural teeth. It is possible to replicate the shape, small gaps between teeth or stains/marks. Sometimes it is better to place a gold crown on a molar (back) tooth. You will be advised about the material used to crown your teeth. Where possible we will use tooth coloured materials.

Please remember that if you bleach your natural teeth, the porcelain on your crowns will not be affected by bleaching so your crowned teeth will not match your natural teeth.

What happens if my crowns/veneers/bridges need replacing?

If your crowns/veneers/bridges were placed in the Dental Hospital, it does not necessarily mean that we will replace them several years later. Once your treatment is completed and you are discharged from the hospital, we would expect your General Dental Practitioner to provide any ongoing maintenance. The cost of any such maintenance is the patients' responsibility.

If you have any queries about the information contained within this leaflet or any other aspects about your treatment please do not hesitate to contact us:

- Restorative First Floor: 0161 393 7734
- Restorative Ground Floor: 0161 393 7735

Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm

For out of hours emergencies please contact your local Accident and Emergency Department.