

# Crowns



## What are they?

The crown of a tooth is that part which is visible in the mouth. An artificial crown is used to protect and restore a broken, weakened or heavily filled tooth. They are also used to improve the appearance of very severely discoloured teeth.

*In order to be able to have a crown, there must be some natural tooth left above the gum.*

Crowns are made of many different materials including metals and ceramics or a combination.

## What will my dentist do?

- The dentist will reduce and shape the tooth so that, when the artificial crown is fitted, it will be the same size and shape as a normal tooth.
- Preparation time will depend on how damaged the tooth is and whether it needs to be built up first.
- If the tooth has died or there isn't enough left to support the crown it may have to be root-filled first; this is sometimes called 'removing the nerve'. If a lot of the tooth is missing the crown maybe held in place by a peg or post in the root canal.
- Your dentist will use a soft mouldable material to make an exact impression of what remains of the tooth that is to be crowned and the adjacent teeth.
- A dental technician uses the impressions to make the crown.
- A temporary crown made of plastic or metal is usually put over the tooth until the permanent crown is made. You can chew on a temporary crown but it won't be as strong as the finished one.

- When the crown is fitted, your dentist may need to make small adjustments to make sure you can bite comfortably. The crown is tried on and then cemented into place.
- The nerves/pulp of crowned teeth can sometimes go on to die, requiring a root filling or, in the worst case, an extraction.
- Maintaining good oral hygiene is important to prevent decay around the margins of the crown.

## What are the benefits?

- A crown is strong and can look and feel exactly like a natural tooth. The colour and shape can be matched to your own teeth.
- Depending on the strength of the tooth underneath, a crown can last for many years if you look after your mouth and teeth and the crown is not accidentally damaged.
- Crowns can also improve your appearance.
- Crowns are often necessary to protect weakened, root-filled teeth.