

Post-op Instructions for Crowns and Bridges

Crowns are used to repair and protect a tooth after extensive tooth structure is lost. Most commonly, crowns are recommended after a root canal on a back tooth, when an entire cusp or more is fractured off, or when a filling or cavity is so large that the tooth requires more protection to avoid breaking. Crowns are a “cap” that protects a single tooth. A bridge is made from two or more crowns attached together to support and fill the space created from missing teeth. Both crowns and bridges have similar steps and post operative instructions.

First appointment: Preparation

During the preparation, the defective structure will be removed to make room for the crown. Unless the tooth has a root canal, anesthetic will be used. An accurate impression is taken and sent to the laboratory to fabricate your custom crown. A temporary crown will be made and cemented to protect your tooth for two weeks while the lab fabricates the final crown. Your temporary crown is not as strong or as smooth as the final crown. You may experience some sensitivity to cold, hot, or pressure while you have your temporary crown.

Second appointment: Cementation

The second appointment is shorter and typically does not require anesthetic. If the final crown fits well, it will be cemented with final cement. Avoid chewing on your crown for 30 minutes after it is cemented. The new crown may feel as if it is pushing against the teeth next to it. This sensation will subside within a day or two. Temperature sensitivity is common and usually subsides within a week. If sensitivity persists or worsens, please call our office. Once the final crown is cemented, you may now floss and brush it as a normal tooth.

Temporary Crown Instructions:

- It is normal to experience some hot and cold sensitivity with the temporary crown
- Brush gently to keep the area as clean as possible
- Do NOT floss or eat crunchy or chewy foods on your temporary crown
 - Gum, flossing, or sticky foods will likely pull the temporary crown off
 - Crunchy foods may break the temporary crown
 - Your gums may become irritated, but will improve when normal flossing can resume
- If the temporary crown comes off in one piece, you may fill it with toothpaste and push it gently back onto your tooth if you can determine the correct orientation
- If the temporary crown is off or broken, call our office to have it recemented or remade
- Until it is recemented, be particularly careful with cold temperatures
- If your temporary crown came off and it is a few days prior to the cement appointment, we may allow the temporary crown to remain off if your tooth is not sensitive

While still numb:

- You will be numb for approximately 3-4 hours
- It is easy to bite or burn your tongue or lip while numb
- Avoid eating and chewing while still numb, you may accidentally chew your cheek, lip, etc
- If you are hungry, foods such as smoothies, ice cream, yogurt, are easiest to eat
- When numb, you may bite slightly differently than normal. If you notice your bite feels “too high” once you are no longer numb, please call our office so we can check and adjust your bite

Managing Discomfort:

- You may take ibuprofen according to the bottle before the anesthetic completely wears off in order help with any swelling or pain at the injection sites where the anesthetic was administered and to minimize tooth discomfort
- Do not take ibuprofen if you dentist or physician as advised otherwise, or you have an allergy to ibuprofen
- Your jaw may feel stiff or sore from holding open during your appointment
- You may use a warm compress and avoid hard foods to allow the muscles to relax

If your bite feels uneven, if you have persistent pain, or if you have any other questions or concerns, please contact our office immediately to obtain help or advice.