

CROWNS - PATIENT INFORMATION **(FIRST APPOINTMENT)**

You've just had the first of two appointments necessary to place a crown. Crowns act as a cover for teeth that have been stained, misaligned, or fractured. They also give strength to teeth that have large fillings or have had root canal treatment. They are a replacement for the natural crown of a tooth. They can be made from porcelain, porcelain and metal, resin, and gold, and can last more than ten years without repair with good oral hygiene and regular smile maintenance visits.

During the first appointment, the tooth to be crowned is reduced in size and shaped to accept the cap. The tooth is left looking like a miniature tooth. Impressions of the surrounding teeth and gums are taken for the laboratory to create a crown that fits well with the rest of the teeth in your mouth. A temporary crown is fitted over the prepared tooth until the permanent crown arrives. The temporary may not be as aesthetically pleasing as you may wish, but it does not reflect the look of the permanent crown.

A temporary crown serves many important functions:

- 1) it protects the internal tooth structure
- 2) it provides a temporary biting surface
- 3) it prevents teeth from shifting
- 4) it prevents food from lodging in the preparation

During the second appointment, the temporary crown is removed and the permanent crown is meticulously bonded in place. A good fit, bite and esthetics are ensured.

WHAT TO EXPECT WITH A TEMPORARY CROWN:

- GUMS:** It is normal for your gums to be sore and sensitive in the area surrounding the preparation. You may feel this discomfort as the anaesthesia wears off. This is due to the treatment and should disappear within a day or two. Rinsing with salt water (8oz. warm water with 1 tsp salt) should alleviate the redness, soreness, and irritation.
- CHEWING:** Avoid chewing on the temporary because sticky foods may dislodge it. It is supposed to be easy to remove and may come off inadvertently. If this happens, rinse off the temporary and blot it dry with Kleenex. Rinse the tooth and blot it dry as well. Stick the temporary back into the tooth. Be gentle; it will only fit one way. Do not use any substances at all to get the temporary to adhere to the tooth; this could damage the nerve of the tooth. Your best intentions can be detrimental to the preparation.
- FLOSSING:** Floss around your temporary in a horizontal fashion, pulling the floss through, instead of pulling up and out. This will prevent the temporary from being knocked out accidentally.
- BRUSHING:** Brushing as often as possible is quite important to keep the gum tissue around the tooth as healthy as possible so that during the second appointment, there is little bleeding from the gums.

RINSING: You will be prescribed or given an antibacterial rinse to use twice daily for the next two weeks until the bonding appointment. The best times to use this rinse are in the morning after breakfast and homecare, and the next time should be right before bedtime after homecare. Take a full amount (capful) and swish thoroughly against the prepared teeth and gums. Do not eat or drink anything for at least 30 minutes. This will keep the gums healthy so that bleeding is minimized on the bonding appointment.

PROBLEMS:

IT FEELS ROUGH: It is normal for the temporary to feel rough. If the temporary feels sharp to the tongue, irritates the tongue and/or cheeks, please call the office. We will gladly smooth and polish these areas.

BITE FEELS HIGH: If you're having difficulty biting down completely or chewing hard food, or are feeling cold sensitivity, call the office and we will adjust the bite on the temporary crown. Leaving the problem may cause the opposing teeth to bruise and the nerve to become inflamed.

SENSITIVITY: You may feel hot or cold sensitivity. This is normal and will subside in a few days. If you feel that the sensations are extreme, call the office.

IT LOOKS UGLY: The temporary crown is just a space filler until the permanent crown is placed. The permanent crown will be far more attractive.

IT FELL OFF: The temporary is designed to come off easily. If it comes off before your next appointment, please call the office. In the meantime, try not to chew on that tooth and avoid sticky foods.

It is also completely normal to send patients home without temporaries on occasion. If this is a feasible alternative, it's usually the one taken. When temporaries aren't placed, patients should expect teeth to look rougher, shorter and yellowed. This is the normal description of a prepared tooth receiving a crown.

In both cases, because a thin layer of enamel has been removed, the tooth may be sensitive until the final crown is placed. This is normal and expected.

We look forward to seeing you on your next appointment and completing your crown. The difference in your smile will astound you!