

Consent for Crowns, Onlay or Bridge

What is a crown and what are its benefits?

When a tooth has sustained substantial damage covering it with a prosthetic material can reinforce it. Substantial damage usually is in the form of deep decay, a piece of the tooth has broken off, a large filling has failed or cracks have developed within the tooth. Each of these results in a tooth with compromised supporting enamel and dentin. Covering the tooth or "capping" it allows it to function within the dentition. When considerable loss of tooth structure has occurred, a procedure called placing a "build up" is done to create a new foundation for the crown. Crowns are also used to correct the appearance of misshaped or severely discolored teeth, replace severely worn down enamel, or to cover an implant. During the procedure the tooth is reshaped by the dentist to allow the crown to fit on the tooth.

An onlay is similar to a crown. However, instead of covering the entire tooth, only a portion of it is treated.

A bridge is a series of crowns where one or more teeth are replaced with a prosthetic tooth called a pontic.

1. Breakage: Crowns and bridges may possibly chip or break. Many factors could contribute to this situation such as chewing excessively hard materials, changes in biting forces, traumatic blows to the mouth, etc. Unobservable cracks may develop in a crown from these causes, but the crown may not actually break until chewing soft foods or for no apparent reason. Assuming no extraordinary event such as a blow to the jaw, car accident, sports injury, etc. a crown will be replaced according to the following prorated basis from the date of placement at current fees:

- * 0-12 months: free replacement
- * 13-24 months: 75% discount
- * 25-36 months: 50% discount
- * 37-48 months: 25% discount
- * after 48 months: 0% discount

2. Uncomfortable or strange feeling: This may occur because of the differences between natural teeth and the prosthetic material (gold or porcelain). Most patients usually become accustomed to this feeling in time. In limited situations, muscle soreness or tenderness of the jaw joints (TMJ) may persist for indeterminable periods of time following placement of the prosthesis. Occlusal equilibration (bite adjustment) may be needed to reduce these sensations.

3. Esthetics or appearance: Patients will be given the opportunity to observe the appearance of the crown in place prior to final cementation. Since a synthetic material is being made to imitate natural tooth structure, by its nature it will never be an exact reproduction of enamel.

4. Longevity of crowns, onlays and bridges: There are many variables that determine how long crowns can be expected to last. Some of these include general health, good oral hygiene, biting pressure, regular dental check ups, diet, etc. Because of this no guarantees can be made or assumed to be made.

5. Minimum two appointments necessary: A crown typically takes 3-4 weeks to be fabricated by a dental laboratory. It is the patient's responsibility to make and keep the second appointment where the crown is cemented in place. Should a patient not return for more than 3 months after the impression was taken, the crown may not fit. The patient will then be charged an additional fee to retake the impression.

6. A temporary crown is part of the process: While the crown is being made in a dental lab, a temporary crown is custom made for the patient. The temporary crown is used to cover the tooth and guard against sensitivity, allow the patient to chew, and not allow neighboring teeth to drift. Should the temporary crown come off, it's the patient's responsibility to contact our office for its being put back on. If a temporary remains off of a tooth for an extended period of time, the final crown may not fit. If that's the case, the patient will be charged an additional fee to retake an impression and make another crown.

7. Night guards or retainers: After a crown is placed a currently fitting night guard (bite splint) or retainer may not fit. Slight modifications can be attempted, but we can not guarantee that it will fit. As a result a new night guard (bite splint) or retainer will need to be made at an additional fee.

What are my alternatives?

In some cases a very large filling can be placed. However, it will last for only a short period of time. Additionally, it can put the tooth in further jeopardy of a negative outcome (i.e. decay, fracture, food trap). A dental onlay may be used in some cases where only a portion of the tooth needs to be repaired. Onlays are conservative in nature but appropriate tooth support must be present and their longevity is less than crowns. As with any dental treatment, the patient can choose no treatment but it too has negative consequences.

INFORMED CONSENT: I can read and write English and have been given the opportunity to ask any questions regarding the nature and purpose of the proposed treatment and have received answers to my satisfaction. I do voluntarily assume any and all possible risks, including the risk of substantial harm, if any, which may be associated with any phase of this treatment in hopes of obtaining the desired and/or any results from the treatment to be rendered to me. The fee(s) for these services have been explained to me and I accept them as satisfactory. By signing this form, I am freely giving my consent to authorize the doctors and staff at Cross Timbers Dental involved in rendering any services they deem necessary or advisable to treatment of my dental conditions, including the administration and/or prescribing of any anesthetic agents and/or medications.

Anesthetic: The use of local anesthetic is used for pain control during dental procedures. There are inherent risks and side effects. They include, but not limited to: swelling, bruising, soreness, elevated blood pressure or pulse, allergic reaction, and altered sensation that may lead to self-injury. Partial or complete numbness may linger after the dental appointment. In rare cases it can last for an extended time and potentially it can be permanent.

Medications: Any medications dispensed or prescribed are the patient's responsibility to understand before taking. Medication inserts are available from our office upon request. Particular attention should be given to possible allergic reactions, drug interactions with current medications and their specific side effects.

Guarantees: The practice of dentistry is not an exact science and no procedure is 100% successful. The doctors and/or staff at Cross Timbers Dental have made no guarantees of a successful outcome.

Notifications: If a patient develops a problem it is the patient's responsibility to notify the doctors and/or staff of Cross Timbers Dental. Through this notification we will be able to act on the patient's behalf. Attempts to correct a problem may occur at our office or a referral to another health care practitioner may be warranted.

Patient's name (please print) _____

Signature of patient/legal guardian _____

Date _____