

CROWNS AND VENEERS

Veneers

Veneers are coverings bonded on to front teeth for cosmetic purposes, to change the colour and/or shape of the teeth. There are direct composite veneers, where the dentist will simply add white filling material to the front of your teeth. The other option, porcelain veneers, involves shaving off some of the tooth (usually just the front surface). The dentist will then take an impression and the lab will construct the veneers. Your dentist will discuss the best option for you. Often a better result can be obtained if veneers are placed symmetrically, rather than a single veneer placed on its own.

In certain circumstances tooth whitening may be a better option to change the colour of the teeth as a first line of action. In some cases, a combination of whitening and veneers may be required to give the best result. If the tooth is very weak, a crown may be a better option.

Crowns

Crowns (also known as caps) are coverings around weak teeth used to protect them. They are shells which go around the teeth, recreating the shapes of natural teeth. They are most commonly placed on teeth where a substantial amount of natural tooth tissue has been lost-i.e., teeth with large fillings or teeth that have had root canal treatment. Your dentist will shape and prepare the teeth, take an impression and the lab will construct the crown.

In some cases, nerves can be damaged when teeth are prepared for crowns. This depends on the original condition of the tooth. If this occurs root canal treatment will be required.

Different types of crowns are suitable for different situations, your dentist will discuss the options to suit your individual needs.

All porcelain crowns

These tend to be used in the front teeth. These crowns can be used to create very natural looking teeth. With advances in technology, these crowns have become increasingly stronger over time. There are different types of all porcelain crowns-some have increased strength, whereas others give a more natural look. Your dentist will discuss with you the best type of crown for you.

Porcelain bonded crown

These are porcelain crowns attached to a metal base. They do not look as natural as all porcelain crowns, however are very strong, and can be used on front or back teeth.

Full metal crowns

These are very strong and are usually used on back teeth. The advantage of these crowns is that only a small amount of preparation is required. These crowns are also more suitable for patients who grind their teeth.

Benefits and Risks:

The purpose of these restorations is to improve function and aesthetics of your dentition.

There is a risk of chipping where porcelain has been used. Crown can also decement from time to time. The decementation risk is higher where there was insufficient tooth structure in the first place or the clinical heights of the teeth are short. Patients who brux are also at a high risk of breaking or decementing crowns. Afterall, the need for the crowns arose in these mouths probably because they had destroyed their dentition with excessive lateral forces generated by bruxism.

Post crowns have the highest risk of decementation, as generally speaking, most of the coronal part of the tooth was lost which necessitated the need for an artificial post and a core.

Statistics have shown that 12-15% of teeth with crowns also result in dead pulps (necrosis of the nerve). This may not necessarily be the effect of the crowns. It is likely that the cause may have been why the crown was necessary in the first place i.e., tooth that was either broken or decayed. In this context, we must recognise that many a teeth and pulp would have been saved by these restorations as they stopped continued bacterial progression (decay) towards the nerve.