



Why do we need crowns?

Crowns are designed to strengthen and support the natural tooth structure which can become weakened from root canal therapy, large fillings, broken tooth structure and worn areas. It is a custom made “cap” that fits over the top of the tooth and extends down to the gum line, encompassing the sides of the remaining tooth structure. Crowns can also be used to improve the aesthetic appearance of the natural teeth by changing the size, shape, colour and position of the tooth.

A crown can be made from, metal, ceramic or a combination of both materials. For an ideal aesthetic result, it is better to avoid the use of metal if possible because it can result in a visible area around the gum line. The crown options we provide at Anzac Avenue Dental include:-

- All ceramic, laboratory fabricated crowns made from pressed ceramic or zirconia.
- All ceramic CEREC fabricated crowns.
- Metal and ceramic laboratory fabricated crowns.
- All metal laboratory fabricated crowns.

Your dentist will advise you which option is most suitable for you.

A crown will be recommended in the following situations:-

- Following root treatment. Root treated teeth become brittle and prone to fracture because the middle part of the tooth is removed in order to access the nerve chamber. The crown strengthens and supports the remaining tooth structure. Without a ceramic crown, root treated teeth have a high risk of root fracture and subsequent tooth loss.
- For heavily filled teeth. Teeth which have been filled with composite resin are at risk of fracture because composite resin is a soft material and not able to sufficiently support the large forces required for chewing, especially in back teeth. A crown can replace all the old composite material and strengthen the remaining tooth structure making it less likely to break or crack.
- To replace old amalgam fillings. Amalgam is a very strong material, however it causes small cracks in the surrounding tooth structure. Eventually these cracks develop into fracture lines and pieces of the tooth structure can break off or the root of the tooth can fracture, resulting in the need to remove the entire tooth. A crown allows all the old amalgam to be removed and the crown placed over the tooth to seal any cracks and replace the lost tooth structure.
- To improve the appearance of the tooth. Teeth which are heavily worn down, discoloured or which have chips or cracks, can have crowns placed to improve their appearance as well as providing strength and support. The ceramic crown can be colour matched so it fits into your smile without looking like a “false” tooth. Some people also choose to have crowns placed on a number of their front teeth to achieve a beautiful smile.

Why is ceramic or metal better than composite resin material?

Chipping and cracking of white plastic fillings made from composite resin is a significant problem. Composite filling material is much weaker than ceramic and metal and we are unable to guarantee its' longevity. Composite fillings can leak and have small areas that can catch when you are flossing. This increases the chance of bacteria and decay forming in the tooth. Composite fillings may need replacing every 3-5 years and each time this occurs, more tooth structure needs to be removed, weakening the tooth and increasing the risk of the tooth cracking or root fracturing. Ceramic and metal restorations are much stronger, and if looked after properly, should have a life span of 20 years.

Do you need to remove my own tooth structure to place the crown?

In some cases we need to remove a small amount of natural tooth structure in order to place the crown and ensure it fits well next to the adjacent teeth. It is important that you can clean and floss around the new crown otherwise you will have problems with gum infection and decay. If the tooth is already heavily filled or broken, we are less likely to need to remove any more tooth structure.

Can crowns chip or break?

Ceramic material is strong, however it is also brittle so chipping and cracking can occur. Eating hard foods such as pork crackle and boiled lollies can result in damage to the crown. It is also advisable to avoid traumatic damage such as using your teeth to open a beer bottle! Bruxism, clenching and grinding can also cause damage to crowns as well as natural tooth structure. Most people who grind their teeth do so during period of stress, or at night while they are asleep. If there is evidence of tooth grinding, your dentist may recommend a protective splint to minimise the risk of damage to the crown. Remember, if you can break natural tooth structure, you can also break a crown, and while we are happy to guarantee your crown against manufacturing faults, we can't guarantee it against the damage you do.

Can a broken crown be fixed?

In some cases a rough edge can be smoothed over, but in most cases, ceramic cannot be added to. If your crown chips or cracks, it will usually need to be replaced.

How long will my crown last?

Properly cared for, a crown should last 20 years, however the gums, root structure, bone and adjacent teeth will all impact on the longevity of your crown. It is important to attend your preventive care visits so we can ensure your crown lasts as long as possible. Following the placement of your new crown, we will provide you with information that will help you look after your crown.

Your ceramic crowns are guaranteed

At Anzac Avenue Dental, we believe that the quality of the dental treatment we provide is of the highest standard. We are pleased to support this belief with a limited warranty that will cover your ceramic treatment for a period of three (3) years.

Regular maintenance of your teeth and gums is vital to ensure the success of your new restoration, so we encourage you to attend your 6 monthly preventive care appointments. Regular maintenance includes a routine restorative and periodontal exam every six months, a clean and polish every six months, and routine radiographs every twelve months.

If your new ceramic crown cracks, chips or breaks during the next three years, we will replace it free of charge, providing you have attended your regular 6 monthly preventive care appointments since the completion of your treatment. You must also have completed all the recommended treatment including a protective night guard if it is advised.

This limited warranty applies to normal wear and tear only and will not apply if your teeth are damaged through any type of accident or injury. Failure to maintain your dental treatment by not attending six monthly preventive care appointments will also void this warranty.

We hope that this information will assist in your informed decision making, but please feel free to discuss these options further with us before we start your treatment.