



Patient Information Leaflet

Conventional Bridge

Cork University Dental School & Hospital



This leaflet has been designed to explain what a conventional bridge is and it contains answers to many frequently asked questions. If you have any other questions that the leaflet does not answer, or if you would like further information, please ask us.

What is a conventional bridge?

A conventional bridge is a number of porcelain teeth joined together to bridge a gap caused by a missing tooth or teeth. The tooth shaped crowns are made in the laboratory to cover a tooth or teeth on either side of the gap. Your bridge can be made of porcelain fused to metal (PFM) or all-ceramic material (ACC). Your dentist will discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each type of bridge, for your particular situation.

Why do I need a bridge?

A bridge is a fixed option to replace a missing tooth or teeth. It is not always necessary to replace missing teeth but you may wish to replace missing teeth to restore your chewing ability and/or aesthetics.

What is involved in having a bridge?

To start with, an impression is taken of your teeth. Then, when your mouth is numbed by anaesthetic, your tooth or teeth will be pared down to allow space for the bridge to be positioned; making sure it suits your current bite. An impression will then be taken of the prepared tooth or teeth and sent to the laboratory, where the bridge will be made. On average, it takes 2-3 weeks for the laboratory to make the bridge. In the meantime, you will have a temporary bridge, made of an acrylic material, to protect your prepared tooth or teeth. Occasionally the temporary crown can fracture or be dislodged. If this happens you should contact your dentist immediately.

When the bridge comes back from the laboratory, the temporary bridge will be removed and the permanent bridge checked for fit, comfort on biting and appearance. If both you and your dentist are happy, the bridge will be permanently cemented in place.

Will I experience pain during treatment?

If the nerve is healthy in the tooth being prepared and it has not previously had a root canal treatment, you may feel sensitivity during the procedure. This can be relieved with further local anaesthetic.

How long does the treatment usually take?

The initial appointment to prepare the tooth can take from 1.5 hours to 3 hours, depending on how complex your case is.

What are the risks associated with a bridge?

If the nerve within a tooth which is prepared for a bridge is alive at the time of treatment, there is a risk that this nerve may be damaged by preparing the tooth. In 10-20% of cases, the nerve in the tooth dies following placement of the bridge. This might mean you will need root canal treatment at a later time. This may also involve replacing the existing bridge.

If the bridge is not maintained well, with good oral hygiene techniques and a low sugar diet, the tooth might start to decay around the bridge. If this goes undetected for a period of time the tooth may require root canal treatment and a new crown, or it may need to be extracted.

This leaflet is available online at <http://www.ucc.ie/en/dentalschool/patients/>