



Patient Information Leaflet **Crowns**

Cork University Dental
School & Hospital



This leaflet has been designed to explain what dental crowns are 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 crown?

A crown is a tooth-shaped cap or covering which is made in a laboratory to cover and protect a broken-down tooth.

Why does my tooth need a crown?

You might need a crown for several reasons. Usually, the tooth is badly broken-down or severely damaged by dental decay. As a result, a simple filling will not be strong enough to withstand the force of your bite. A crown covers the damaged tooth and protects the remaining tooth structure by spreading the force of chewing evenly.

What is involved in having a crown?

A crown may be made entirely of **metal** (gold or silver palladium), **porcelain fused to metal** (PFM) or **all ceramic** (ACC). Your dentist will talk to you about each type of crown and recommend the best type for your particular case.

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

When the crown comes back from the laboratory, the temporary crown will be removed and the permanent crown checked for fit, comfort on biting and appearance. If you and your dentist are both happy with the look and feel of the crown, it will be permanently cemented onto your tooth.

Will I feel pain during treatment?

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

Please turn over

How long does the treatment usually take?

The 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 crown?

If the nerve within the tooth 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 crown. This might mean you will need root canal treatment at a later time. This may also involve replacing the existing crown.

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

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