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What Is A Crown (Cap) And Why Do I Need One?

I have practiced dentistry for 35 plus years, and one trend that disturbs me is that more crowns are being recommended for teeth which I do not feel need them. Just a short time ago when I was away a patient broke a filling. The dentist she saw suggested a build up and crown, and a possible root canal. Fortunately she waited for me to return and the only thing the tooth required was a large filling.

There are however many reasons a tooth may require a crown. Some of them are:

- If there is a lot of the tooth structure missing either from decay, accident or fracture.
- To attach a bridge for missing teeth
- To protect weak teeth from fracturing
- To correct badly shaped or discolored teeth
- To cover a dental implant
- Where remaining tooth is weak, cracked, or just unable to hold a filling, a crown may be necessary.
- Teeth with root canals may have to be protected by a crown.

There are basically three types of crowns.

- All porcelain
- Porcelain fused to metal
- All metal

Each has a certain advantage. Which is best for you? That is something to be discussed by you and your dentist.

Several steps are involved in making a crown. At the first visit I will prepare the tooth by removing the outer portion of your tooth to accommodate the thickness of the crown. The old filling and decay are removed and a buildup bonded if needed to serve as the foundation for the crown. An impression is then made to provide an exact model of the

prepared tooth. My dental laboratory technician, following my written instruction will then make the crown from the model.

Provisional (temporary) crowns (often made of acrylic resins) are placed while the final crown is made. When rendering cosmetic treatment, you will have the opportunity to evaluate what you like or want changed while you have these provisional crowns in place. These changes will then be communicated to the dental laboratory.

When the final crown or crowns are ready, I place them and make any necessary adjustments. Once again you and I will evaluate the work and only after we are both satisfied, cement them to place.

Some final advice: It is important to be sure a dentist is experienced and skilled enough to do your case and also uses quality materials, etc. Do not try to find the cheapest crown because if it is not done correctly, looks bad, does not fit right and has to be redone, it will not turn out to be a good deal at all. It is a compliment to me that people who work at the dental laboratory see me as a dentist.

CASE EXAMPLES



An individual crown on an implant



Crowns connected for a bridge.



Before



After. She is thrilled with the result.