

# *Services we offer at our office:*

---

## Along with general cleanings we also offer:

### **Bridges**

If you're missing one or more teeth, you may notice a difference in chewing and speaking. There are options to help restore your smile.

Bridges help maintain the shape of your face, as well as alleviating the stress in your bite by replacing missing teeth.

Sometimes called a fixed partial denture, a bridge replaces missing teeth with artificial teeth, looks great, and literally bridges the gap where one or more teeth may have been. The restoration can be made from gold, alloys, porcelain or a combination of these materials and is bonded onto surrounding teeth for support.

Unlike a removable bridge, which you can take out and clean, a fixed bridge can only be removed by a dentist.

An implant bridge attaches artificial teeth directly to the jaw or under the gum tissue. Depending on which type of bridge your dentist recommends, its success depends on its foundation. So it's very important to keep your remaining teeth healthy and strong.

### **Crowns**

If you want a smile that's your crowning glory, you may need a crown to cover a tooth and restore it to its normal shape and size. A crown can make your tooth stronger and improve its appearance.

It can cover and support a tooth with a large filling when there isn't enough tooth left. It can be used to attach a bridge, protect a weak tooth from breaking or restore one that's already broken. A crown is a good way to cover teeth that are discolored or badly shaped. It's also used to cover a dental implant.

If your dentist recommends a crown, it's probably to correct one of these conditions. Your dentist's primary concern, like yours, is helping you keep your teeth healthy and your smile bright -- literally, your crowning glory.

# Dental Sealants

Dental sealants act as a barrier, protecting the teeth against decay-causing bacteria. The sealants are usually applied to the chewing surfaces of the back teeth (premolars and molars) where decay occurs most often.

## How does a sealant help prevent decay?

A sealant is a plastic material that is usually applied to the chewing surfaces of the back teeth—premolars and molars. This plastic resin bonds into the depressions and grooves (pits and fissures) of the chewing surfaces of back teeth. The sealant acts as a barrier, protecting enamel from plaque and acids.

Thorough brushing and flossing help remove food particles and plaque from smooth surfaces of teeth. But toothbrush bristles cannot reach all the way into the depressions and grooves to extract food and plaque. Sealants protect these vulnerable areas by "sealing out" plaque and food.

## Is sealant application a complicated procedure?

Sealants are easy for your dentist to apply, and it takes only a few minutes to seal each tooth. The teeth that will be sealed are cleaned. Then the chewing surfaces are roughened with an acid solution to help the sealant adhere to the tooth. The sealant is then 'painted' onto the tooth enamel, where it bonds directly to the tooth and hardens. Sometimes a special curing light is used to help the sealant harden.

As long as the sealant remains intact, the tooth surface will be protected from decay. Sealants hold up well under the force of normal chewing and usually last several years before a reapplication is needed. During your regular dental visits, your dentist will check the condition of the sealants and reapply them when necessary.

## Sealants are just for kids, right?

The likelihood of developing pit and fissure decay begins early in life, so children and teenagers are obvious candidates. But adults can benefit from sealants as well.

Key ingredients in preventing tooth decay and maintaining a healthy mouth are twice-daily brushing with an ADA-accepted fluoride toothpaste; cleaning between the teeth daily with floss or interdental cleaners; eating a balanced diet and limiting snacks; and visiting your dentist regularly. Ask your dentist about whether sealants can put extra power behind your prevention program.

# Partial Dentures, Removable

Removable partial dentures usually consist of replacement teeth attached to pink or gum-colored plastic bases, which are connected by metal framework.

Removable partial dentures attach to your natural teeth with metal clasps or devices called precision attachments.

## How long will it take to get used to wearing a denture?

For the first few weeks, your new partial denture may feel awkward or bulky. However, your mouth will eventually become accustomed to wearing it. Inserting and removing the denture will require some practice. Follow all instructions given by your dentist. Your denture should fit into place with relative ease. Never force the partial denture into position by biting down. This could bend or break the clasps.

## Will it be difficult to eat with a partial denture?

Replacing missing teeth should make eating a more pleasant experience. Start out by eating soft foods that are cut into small pieces. Chew on both sides of the mouth to keep even pressure on the denture. Avoid foods that are extremely sticky or hard. You may want to avoid chewing gum while you adjust to the denture.

## Will my denture need adjusting?

Over time, adjusting the denture may be necessary. As you age, your mouth naturally changes, which can affect the fit of the denture. Your bone and gum ridges can recede or shrink, resulting in a loose-fitting denture. Dentures that do not fit properly should be adjusted by your dentist. Loose dentures can cause various problems, including sores or infections. See your dentist promptly if your denture becomes loose.

## Can I make minor adjustments or repairs to my denture?

You can do serious harm to your denture and to your health by trying to adjust or repair your denture. A denture that is not made to fit precisely by a dentist can cause irritation and sores. Using a do-it-yourself kit can damage the appliance beyond repair. Glues sold over-the-counter often contain harmful chemicals and should not be used on a denture.

If your denture no longer fits properly, if it breaks, cracks or chips, or if one of the teeth becomes loose, see your dentist immediately. In many cases, dentists can make necessary adjustments or repairs, often on the same day. Complicated repairs may require that the denture be sent to a special dental laboratory.

# Tooth Extractions

What should you expect when you are scheduled for a tooth extraction?

Your dentist will numb the area to lessen any discomfort. After the extraction, your dentist will advise you of what post extraction regimen to follow, in most cases a small amount of bleeding is normal.

Avoid anything that might prevent normal healing. It is usually best not to smoke or rinse your mouth vigorously, or drink through a straw for 24 hours. These activities could dislodge the clot and delay healing.

For the first few days, if you must rinse, rinse your mouth gently afterward, for pain or swelling, apply a cold cloth or an ice bag. Ask your dentist about pain medication. You can brush and floss the other teeth as usual. But don't clean the teeth next to the tooth socket.

When having an extraction, today's modern procedures and follow up care as recommended by your dentist are there to provide you the patient great benefit and comfort.

## Veneers

There's no reason to put up with gaps in your teeth or with teeth that are stained, badly shaped or crooked. Today a veneer placed on top of your teeth can correct nature's mistake or the results of an injury and help you have a beautiful smile.

Veneers are thin, custom-made shells crafted of tooth-colored materials designed to cover the front side of teeth. They're made by a dental technician, usually in a dental lab, working from a model provided by your dentist.

You should know that this is usually an irreversible process, because it's necessary to remove a small amount of enamel from your teeth to accommodate the shell.

Your dentist may recommend that you avoid some foods and beverages that may stain or discolor your veneers such as coffee, tea or red wine. Sometimes a veneer might chip or fracture. But for many people the results are more than worth it.

If you have any questions about veneers ask your dentist.

# Implants

Crowns and conventional bridges or dentures may not be your only options when replacing missing teeth. For some people, dental implants offer a smile that looks and feels very natural. Surgically placed below the gums over a series of appointments, implants fuse to the jawbone and serve as a base for individual replacement teeth, bridges or a denture.

Implants offer stability because they fuse to your bone. Integration of the implants into your jaw also helps your replacement teeth feel more natural and some people also find the secure fit more comfortable than conventional substitutes.

**Candidates for dental implants need to have healthy gums and adequate bone to support the implant. A thorough evaluation by your dentist will help determine whether you are a good candidate for dental implants.**

## What is involved in placing implants?

First, surgery is performed to place the anchor. Surgery can take up to several hours, and up to six months may be required for the bone to grow around the anchor and firmly hold it in place. Some implants require a second surgery in which a post is attached to connect the anchor to the replacement teeth. With other implants, the anchor and post are already attached and are placed at the same time.

After the gums have had several weeks to heal, the next step is begun. The artificial teeth are made and fitted to the post portion of the anchor. Because several fittings may be required, this step can take one to two months to complete.

Implant surgery can be done either in a dental office or in a hospital, depending upon a number of factors. A local or general anesthetic may be used. Usually pain medications and, when necessary, antibiotics are prescribed. Your dentist will give you instructions on diet and oral hygiene.

## Endodontic Treatment (Root Canal Treatment)

Once upon a time, if you had a tooth with a diseased nerve, you'd probably lose that tooth. Today, with a special dental procedure called a root canal therapy you may save that tooth. Inside each tooth is the pulp which provides nutrients and nerves to the tooth, it runs like a thread down through the root. When the pulp is diseased or injured, the pulp tissue dies. If you don't remove it, your tooth gets infected and you could lose it. After the dentist removes the pulp, the root canal is cleaned and sealed off to protect it. Then your dentist places a crown over the tooth to help make it stronger.

Most of the time, a root canal is a relatively simple procedure with little or no discomfort involving one to three visits. Best of all, it can save your tooth and your smile!

# Cosmetic Dentistry

A smile can be the most eye-catching feature of a face. With dentistry's many advances, you no longer have to settle for stained, chipped, or misshapen teeth. You now have choices that can help you smile with confidence.

Even the most subtle change in your smile can make a dramatic difference in the way you look and feel about yourself. Talk to your dentist about the options most suitable for you, what your expectations are and the dental fees involved. Some options are:

- **Tooth whitening** (bleaching) brightens teeth that are discolored or stained. Bleaching may be done completely in the dental office or the dentist may dispense a system for you to use at home.
- **Bonding** can improve the appearance of teeth that are chipped, broken, cracked, stained, or have spaces between them. With bonding, tooth-colored materials are applied, or bonded, to the tooth surface.
- **Enamel shaping** involves modifying teeth to improve their appearance by removing or contouring enamel. The process, which often is combined with bonding, usually is quick and comfortable and the results can be seen immediately.
- **Veneers** are thin custom-made shells designed to cover the front side of teeth. Made of tooth-colored materials, veneers are used to treat spaces between teeth and teeth that are chipped or worn, permanently stained, poorly shaped or slightly crooked.
- **Invisalign braces**...see [www.invisalign.com](http://www.invisalign.com)

## Dental Filling Options

Thanks to advances in modern dental materials and techniques, dentists have more ways to create pleasing, natural-looking smiles. Dental researchers are continuing their often decades-long work developing materials, such as ceramics and polymer compounds that look more like natural teeth. As a result, dentists and patients today have several choices when it comes to selecting materials to repair missing, worn, damaged or decayed teeth.

These new materials have not eliminated the usefulness of more traditional dental materials, such as gold, base metal alloys and dental amalgam. That's because the strength and durability of traditional dental materials continue to make them useful for situations, such as fillings in the back teeth where chewing forces are greatest.

## **What's Right for Me?**

Several factors influence the performance, durability, longevity and cost of dental restorations. These factors include: the patient's oral and general health, the components used in the filling material; where and how the filling is placed; the chewing load that the tooth will have to bear; and the length and number of visits needed to prepare and adjust the restored tooth.

## **Amalgam Fillings**

Used by dentists for more than a century, dental amalgam is the most thoroughly researched and tested restorative material among all those in use. It is durable, easy to use, highly resistant to wear and relatively inexpensive in comparison to other materials. For those reasons, it remains a valued treatment option for dentists and their patients.

Dental amalgam is a stable alloy made by combining elemental mercury, silver, tin, copper and possibly other metallic elements. Although dental amalgam continues to be a safe, commonly used restorative material, some concern has been raised because of its mercury content. However, the mercury in amalgam combines with other metals to render it stable and safe for use in filling teeth.

Because amalgam fillings can withstand very high chewing loads, they are particularly useful for restoring molars in the back of the mouth where chewing load is greatest. They are also useful in areas where a cavity preparation is difficult to keep dry during the filling replacement, such as in deep fillings below the gum line. Amalgam fillings, like other filling materials, are considered biocompatible—they are well tolerated by patients with only rare occurrences of allergic response.

Disadvantages of amalgam include possible short-term sensitivity to hot or cold after the filling is placed. The silver-colored filling is not as natural looking as one that is tooth-colored, especially when the restoration is near the front of the mouth, and shows when the patient laughs or speaks. And to prepare the tooth, the dentist may need to remove more tooth structure to accommodate an amalgam filling than for other types of fillings.

## **Are dental amalgams safe?**

Yes. Dental amalgam has been used in tooth restorations worldwide for more than 100 years. Studies have failed to find any link between amalgam restorations and any medical disorder. Amalgam continues to be a safe restorative material for dental patients.

## **Composite Fillings**

Composite fillings are a mixture of glass or quartz filler in a resin medium that produces a tooth-colored filling. They are sometimes referred to as composites or filled resins. Composite fillings provide good durability and resistance to fracture in small-to-mid size restorations that need to withstand moderate chewing pressure. Less tooth structure is removed when the dentist prepares the tooth, and this may

result in a smaller filling than that of an amalgam. Composites can also be "bonded" or adhesively held in a cavity, often allowing the dentist to make a more conservative repair to the tooth.

The cost is moderate and depends on the size of the filling and the technique used by the dentist to place it in the prepared tooth. It generally takes longer to place a composite filling than what is required for an amalgam filling. Composite fillings require a cavity that can be kept clean and dry during filling and they are subject to stain and discoloration over time.

**All the above information provided by The American Dental Association**

**[www.ada.org](http://www.ada.org)**

DUCKETT DENTAL