

# Stainless Steel, Full Bonded, & Zirconia Crowns Guidelines

## Use

Crowns are more durable than fillings and are often required to restore teeth in cases of:

- large cavities
- multi-surface decay
- teeth treated with baby tooth root canal
- fillings have fractured or broken
- severe wear due to bruxing and grinding
- excessive decalcification or decay at the gumline

## Crown Types

**Stainless Steel Crowns** - are made of surgical grade stainless steel and are the most durable of the crown types. They are silver metallic in colour and do not contain any mercury or toxic materials. They are used for back teeth.

**Pre-Veneered Steel Crowns** - stainless steel with a white front veneer. They are used for front teeth and are a universal white shade. They will appear whiter and brighter than natural baby teeth because the crowns are opaque whereas natural teeth are translucent. They are also generally larger than natural teeth and can look more bulky.

**Zirconia Crowns** - are ceramic and have no metal. They look more natural and will look less bulky, and are used for front teeth and the 1st baby molars (smaller of the two baby molars). Esthetically, they are the best option available.

The spacing between front teeth will change once crowns are placed and can either increase or decrease.

## Placement and Loss of Crowns

Crowns are cemented (glued) to teeth after the tooth is prepared and shaped. The cement keeps the crown in place during normal chewing. However, sticky goeey foods such as Starburst, toffee, gummy bears, Jolly Ranchers, fruit roll-ups, etc will pull on the crowns and can in time pull them off.

## Changes in Bite and Occlusion

Since the crowns are pre-made (not custom made like adult crowns), there will be a period of time that is required for the teeth and bite to adjust to the new pattern of biting and chewing - usually a few days at most.

## Bruxing and Grinding

Crowns are the most durable way to repair teeth and will withstand bruxing and grinding far better than fillings. However, bruxing or grinding habits may cause the baby teeth that have been crowned to be lost earlier by accelerating root resorption, especially if the tooth has had a root canal procedure done. Bruxing may also dislodge a crown. If the bruxing habit is severe, children may grind through the stainless steel crowns.

## Should a Crown Come Off

Should a stainless steel crown come off, call our office or your family dentist to have it re-cemented. Please bring the crown with you. A dislodged crown is not an urgent emergency, but should be re-cemented within several days to prevent the teeth from shifting. If left off for weeks or months, crowns will no longer fit.

## Problems with Crowned Teeth

Crowns are usually placed on teeth that have had extensive cavities and/or root canal treatment. Such teeth are inherently more likely to become sick because they have already been badly damaged. It is possible to have the nerve die and an abscess to develop if the body is not able to heal after the cavity has been removed. This is not caused by the crown, but is seen more often with teeth that have had crowns placed simply because crowns are used to repair teeth with large decay and fillings those with small cavities.

## Care Following Crown Placement

Crowns will initially cause irritation of the gums. **The best way to prevent/reduce soreness is to have well brushed and healthy gums before the crowns are placed, and to start brushing shortly after they are placed.** This keeps bacteria from gathering on the crowns and causing further irritation. **Start brushing the day crowns are placed.**

If the crowns are not brushed thoroughly after placement, the gums will not heal properly. They will swell, become very tender, and bleed when touched. It is paramount to maintain good brushing before and after crowns are placed to avoid a situation where gums become so sore that your child will not let you brush them at all.