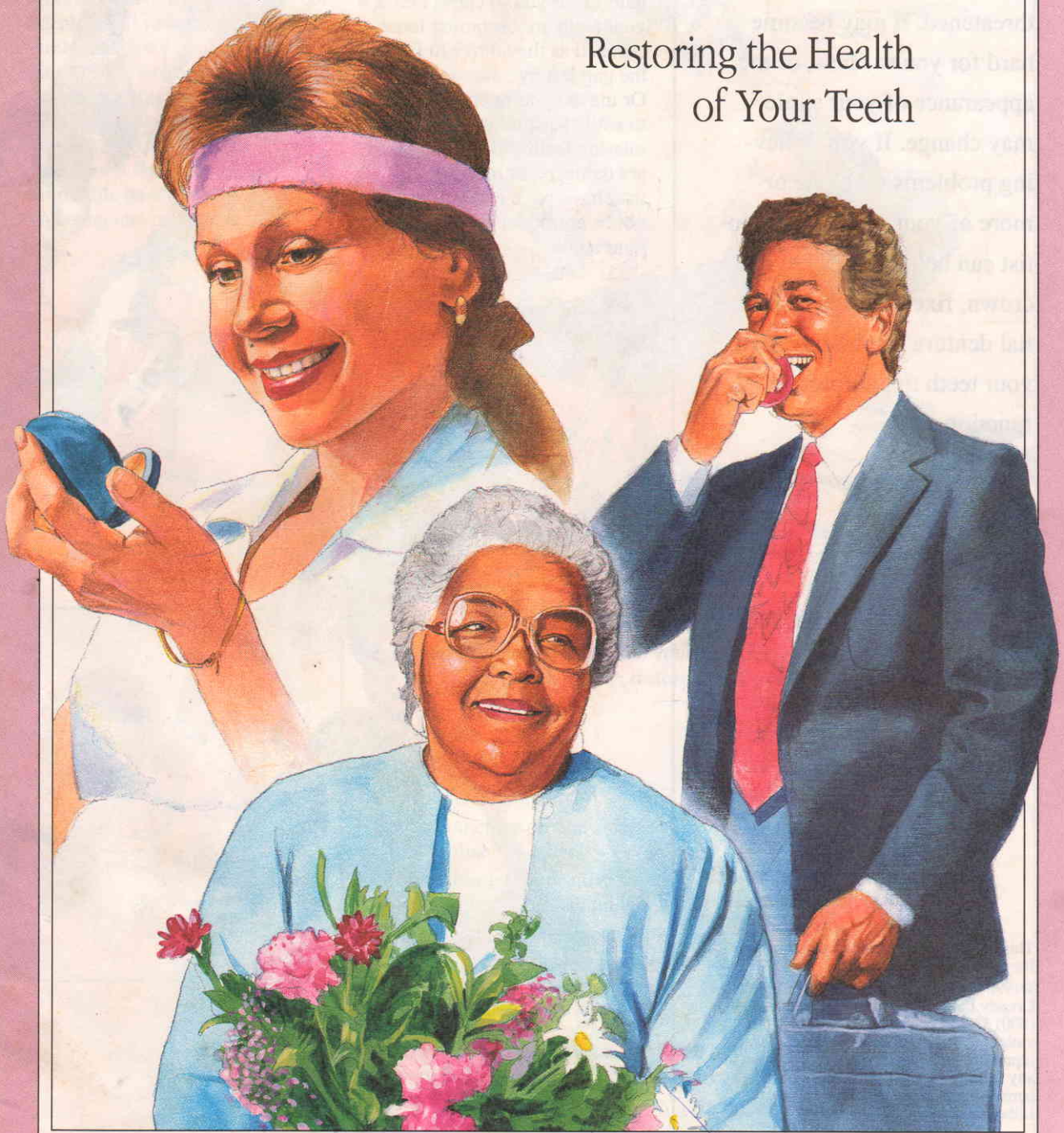


# CROWNS, BRIDGES and PARTIAL DENTURES

Restoring the Health  
of Your Teeth



## REPLACING DAMAGED OR MISSING TEETH

**E**ach of your teeth depends on the others to help you eat and speak. So, when one or more is damaged or missing, the health of the others may be threatened. It may become hard for you to chew, or the appearance of your smile may change. If you're having problems with one or more of your teeth, your dentist can help you decide if a crown, fixed bridge, or partial denture can help restore your teeth to their normal function.

### Damaged and Missing Teeth

Several problems can occur when your teeth are damaged or missing. Cracked or broken teeth may make it difficult or painful for you to chew. Perhaps your teeth are becoming loose or crooked as they move to fill in the gap left by a missing tooth. Or maybe you're embarrassed to smile because of uneven or missing teeth. When your teeth are damaged or missing, you may have pain, and you may not be confident about your smile.



### Better and Smoother

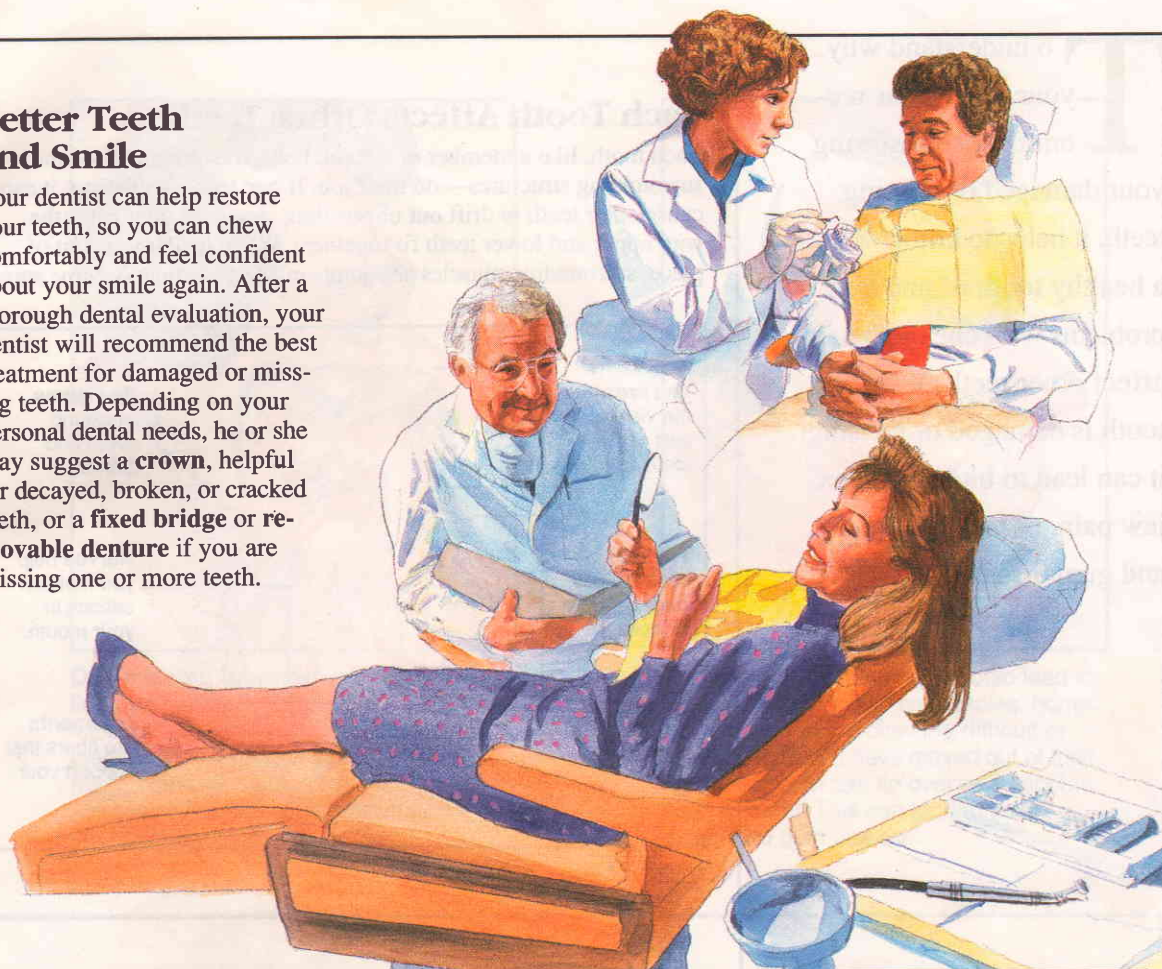
Your dentist can help you get your teeth back to their normal, comfortable appearance. You can be thorough about your dental care with a dentist who offers a variety of treatment options for missing teeth. Your personal dentist may suggest a partial denture for decayed teeth, or a removable partial denture for missing or

This booklet is not intended as a substitute for professional dental care.

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## Better Teeth and Smile

Your dentist can help restore your teeth, so you can chew comfortably and feel confident about your smile again. After a thorough dental evaluation, your dentist will recommend the best treatment for damaged or missing teeth. Depending on your personal dental needs, he or she may suggest a **crown**, helpful for decayed, broken, or cracked teeth, or a **fixed bridge** or **removable denture** if you are missing one or more teeth.



## Can You Count on Your Teeth?

If you're not pleased with how your teeth feel or look, you may benefit by having your teeth restored. Ask yourself the following:

### ...For Eating

- Is chewing difficult?
- Does chewing hurt?
- Do you chew on one side more than the other?
- Are your teeth sensitive to cold or hot food or liquids?
- Does food catch between teeth?
- Do your jaw joints or chewing muscles feel sore?

### ...For Smiling

- Are you unhappy with your smile?
- Are you self-conscious about spaces between teeth?
- Are you concerned about crooked teeth?
- Are you self-conscious about missing or broken teeth?
- Are your teeth discolored?

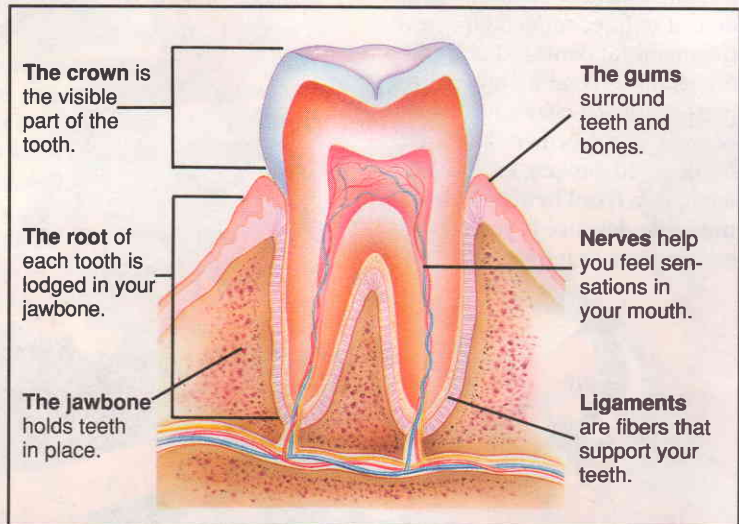
The more boxes you check, the more likely it is that your dentist will recommend treatment to help restore your teeth.

## THE TOOTH CONNECTION

To understand why your dentist has recommended restoring your damaged or missing teeth, it helps to know what a healthy tooth is, and how problems with one tooth can affect other teeth. When a tooth is damaged or missing, it can lead to bite problems, jaw pain, or tooth decay and gum disease.

### Each Tooth Affects Other Teeth

Each tooth, like a member of a team, helps the other teeth—and surrounding structures—do their job. If one tooth is missing, it can cause other teeth to drift out of position, changing your **bite** (the way upper and lower teeth fit together). When teeth move out of place, surrounding muscles and joints in your jaw may become sore.



### Problems with Teeth

Not everyone is aware of problems with his or her teeth. Injured or missing teeth don't always hurt, and may seem harmless enough. But if they're not fixed or replaced quickly, they can lead to chewing problems, affect other teeth, and affect how you look and feel.



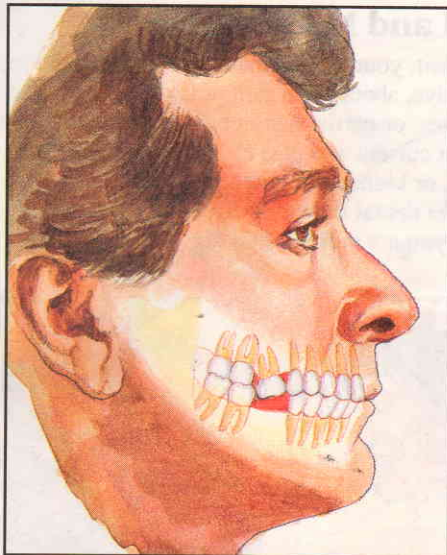
#### Decayed Teeth

Decay-causing germs can make a tooth break down, leading to pain or even loss of the tooth.

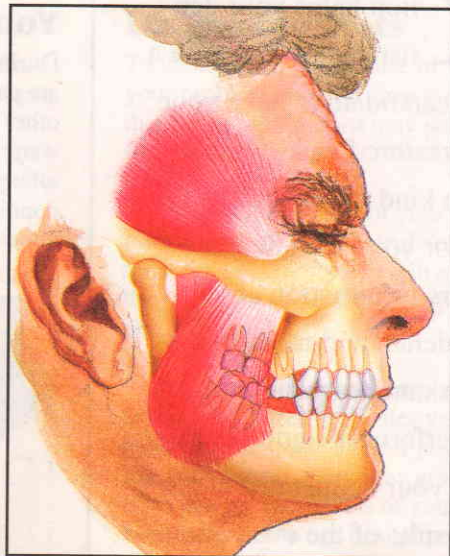


#### Missing Teeth

Missing teeth can lead to a poor bite, making chewing difficult and affecting your appearance.



**One missing tooth** can cause the position of other teeth to change. The space left by the missing tooth may cause some teeth to tilt forward, or opposing teeth to move down. A missing tooth can also create spaces between your teeth, changing your bite and smile.



**Shifting and drifting teeth** could lead to changes in your chewing muscles, bones, and joints, making chewing difficult or painful. Teeth that have moved out of their normal position can tip over and become hard to clean. This can lead to tooth decay and gum disease.



**Broken Teeth**

A broken tooth is often painful. It can also affect your smile and make it difficult for you to chew.



**Cracked Teeth**

A cracked tooth can cause pain when you chew. It is caused by decay or "wear and tear."



**Uneven Teeth**

Uneven or poorly shaped teeth can affect your bite and smile, making chewing difficult.



**Worn Restored Teeth**

Existing crowns, bridges, or removable dentures may need to be replaced if they're worn out.

## YOUR DENTAL EVALUATION

**Y**our dental evaluation helps your dentist decide if you're a good candidate to have your teeth restored and, if you are, which kind of restoration is best for you. Your dentist gathers information about your dental and medical history, examines your teeth, and performs diagnostic tests. Then your dentist discusses the results of the evaluation, the best treatment options for you, and the costs of treatment to help you decide the type of restoration that is best for you.

### Your Dental and Medical History

During your first visit, your dentist may ask whether your teeth are painful or sensitive, about prior gum or jaw problems, and about other crowns, bridges, or partial dentures. Your dentist may also want to know about current and past medical problems, such as allergies, surgeries, or kidney or heart disorders, because some conditions can affect dental treatment. He or she may ask you about medications you are currently taking.



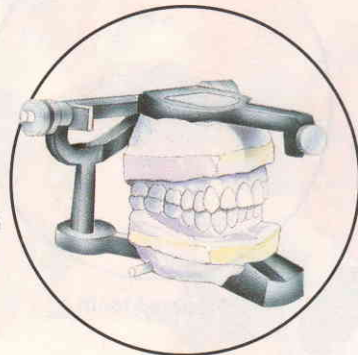
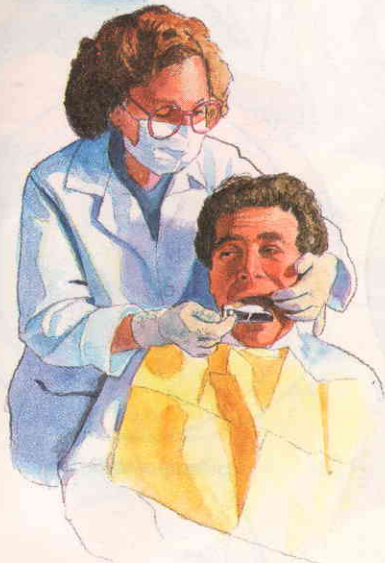
### Your Dental Exam

An examination determines the condition of your gums, teeth, bite, and jaw. Your dentist checks your gums for inflammation or bleeding, and evaluates the general condition of your teeth. Are any missing? Have you had any prior restorative work? Are your teeth loose, cracked, or sensitive? Then your dentist checks your bite to determine how your upper and lower teeth relate to each other. He or she also checks your jaw to make sure the teeth and bones are strong enough to support restorative work.





X-ray of teeth



Diagnostic cast of teeth and jaw

## Diagnostic Tests

To identify the exact cause of your problem or to confirm your diagnosis, your dentist may perform certain tests.

- **X-rays** show views of your jaws and teeth. They help determine the health of your teeth and the condition of bones that support them.

- **The diagnostic cast** is a plasterlike model that replicates your teeth and the shape of your jaw. It lets your dentist study how your teeth line up and details of your bite, so he or she can design your restoration.

- **A nerve test** consists of a slight electrical impulse that is sent to the tooth to determine if the tooth nerve is alive, and if other dental work is needed before restorative work begins.



## Deciding on a Treatment Plan

After your evaluation, you and your dentist will discuss the results and, together, decide on the best treatment option for you. Your dentist may recommend a crown to protect or restore a tooth, or a fixed bridge or partial denture to replace missing teeth. Your dentist may also recommend building up damaged teeth so they can support the restorative work.

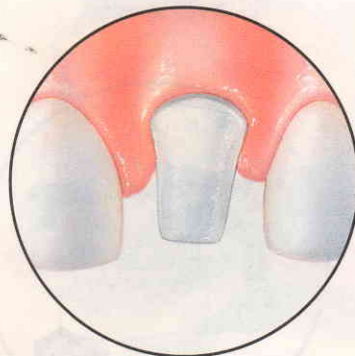
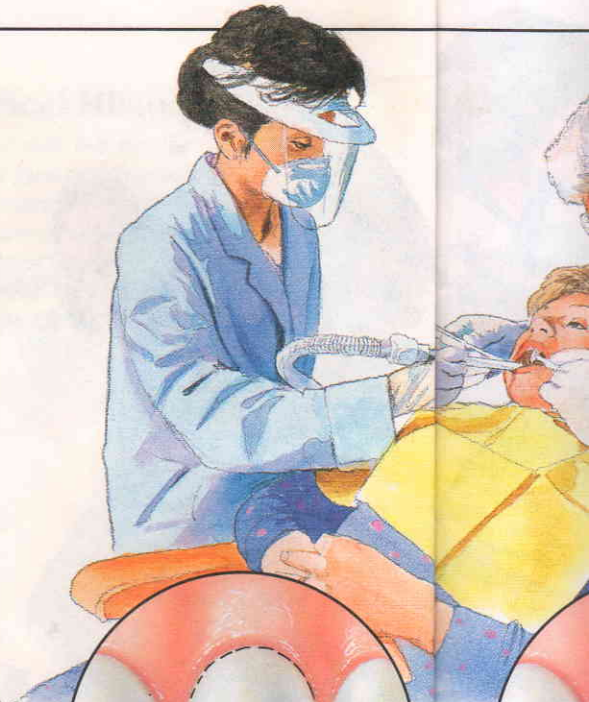
## THE CROWN: CAPPING THE TOOTH



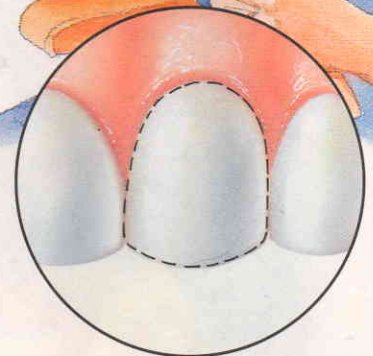
**A** crown (often called a cap) is an artificial cover that restores a decayed or damaged tooth to its normal shape and size. It is useful for protecting the structure of a tooth that is cracked or broken. A crown can also be used to change the shape of a tooth, to correct a bite or cosmetic problem, or to replace existing broken or poor-fitting crowns. A crown may be made of gold, other metals, or porcelain.

### Preparing for Your Crown

Your dentist prepares your damaged tooth for a crown by reducing and reshaping the tooth so the crown will fit properly. Then an impression of the prepared tooth and of the surrounding and opposing teeth is taken. Before you leave the office, your dentist makes and applies a **temporary crown** to protect the prepared tooth between visits.



Prepared tooth



Temporary crown

### Between Visits

Your dentist sends the impression to a dental laboratory that specializes in making crowns. Expect to wait two to three weeks between appointments while your crown is being made. Meanwhile, take care of your temporary crown by avoiding hard or sticky foods. Floss carefully around the temporary by pulling the floss out from the side of the tooth—not the top. If the crown becomes loose, call your dentist, so the prepared tooth won't be damaged.



**Living**

With

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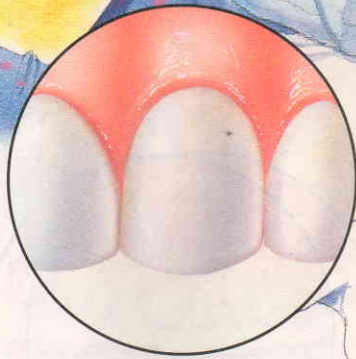
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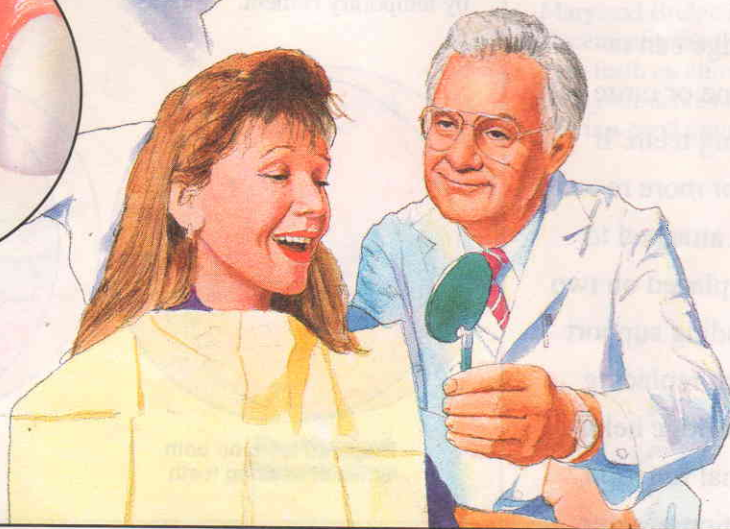


## Fitting Your Crown

Your dentist replaces your temporary crown with the permanent one that has been made by the lab. He or she places the crown on your prepared tooth, making sure the crown restores the tooth to its proper shape, looks good, and feels comfortable against your opposing teeth. If necessary, your dentist adjusts the crown by modifying the shape. Once you both agree the fit is comfortable, your dentist cements the crown into place. If the crown needs further changes by the lab, additional visits will be necessary.



Crown in place



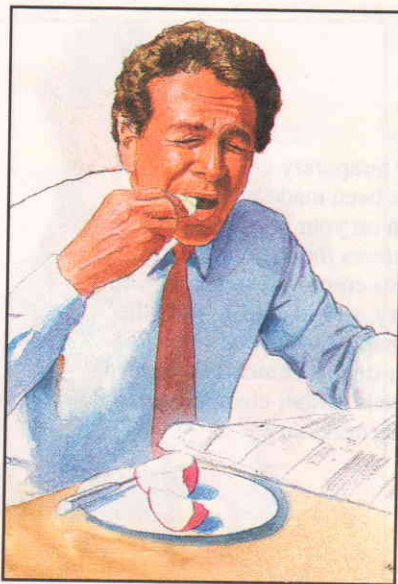
## Living with Your Crown

With good oral hygiene, your crown will last longer.

- Brush and floss around your crowned tooth thoroughly to remove decay-causing germs.
- See your dentist regularly to help prolong the life of your crown.
- Ask your dentist about special cleaning aids.



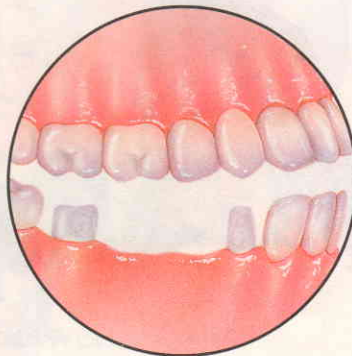
## FIXED BRIDGE: FILLING THE GAP



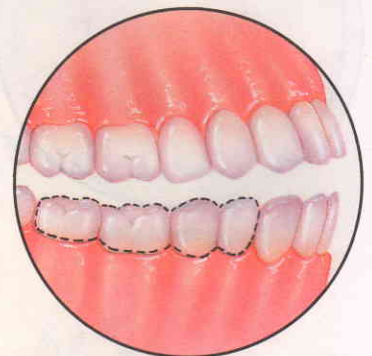
**A** fixed bridge can replace one or more missing teeth. It consists of one or more replacement teeth attached to crowns that are placed on two or more surrounding support teeth. Along with replacing teeth, the fixed bridge helps restore the normal function and proper position of your bite. A fixed bridge is made of various metals, porcelain, or a combination of the two.

### Preparing for Your Bridge

Your dentist first reshapes the support teeth that will hold the crowns of your fixed bridge. Then an impression of the prepared tooth, and of the surrounding and opposing teeth, is taken. If appearance counts, your dentist selects a color from a color guide to make sure the replacement teeth match the color of your natural teeth. To protect your prepared teeth while the fixed bridge is being made, your dentist may fit a temporary bridge that is held in place by temporary cement.



Prepared teeth on both sides of missing teeth

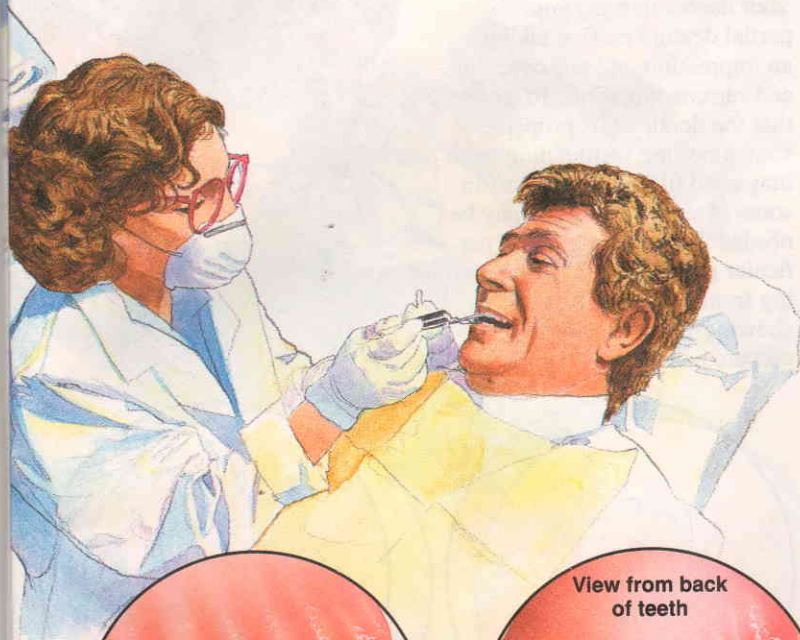


Temporary fixed bridge

### Between Visits

Your dentist sends the impression and color recommendation to the dental laboratory making your fixed bridge. Expect to wait about three weeks between appointments while the lab work is being done. Be careful when cleaning your teeth or eating, because your temporary bridge can loosen easily. To protect the prepared support teeth, let your dentist know immediately if the temporary bridge comes off or is loose.





## Fitting Your Bridge

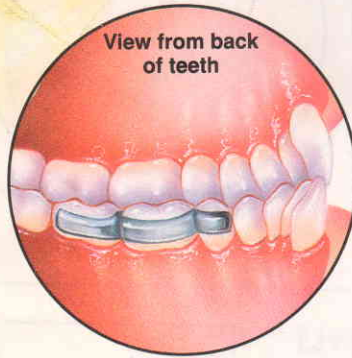
After removing your temporary bridge, your dentist places the fixed bridge onto your prepared teeth, adjusting it in your mouth. When the fit and bite are comfortable, the fixed bridge is cemented into place. After trying the fixed bridge for a few days, if you think the bridge needs further adjusting, call your dentist.

## The Maryland Bridge

In certain situations, and if your surrounding teeth are in good condition, your dentist may recommend a Maryland Bridge. The Maryland Bridge is made of a replacement tooth that is bonded to your teeth on either side. Talk with your dentist to determine if this is a good option for you.



Fixed bridge  
in place



View from back  
of teeth

The Maryland  
Bridge in place

## Living with Your Fixed Bridge

With good oral hygiene, your bridge will last longer.

- Prevent decay-causing germs by brushing and flossing—especially around the bridge.
- See your dentist regularly to help prolong the life of your bridge.
- Ask your dentist about special cleaning aids.



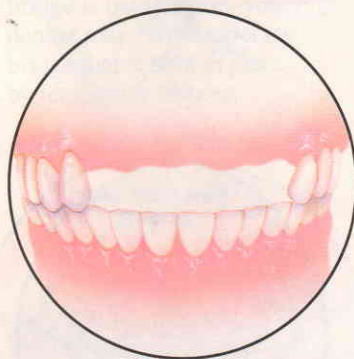
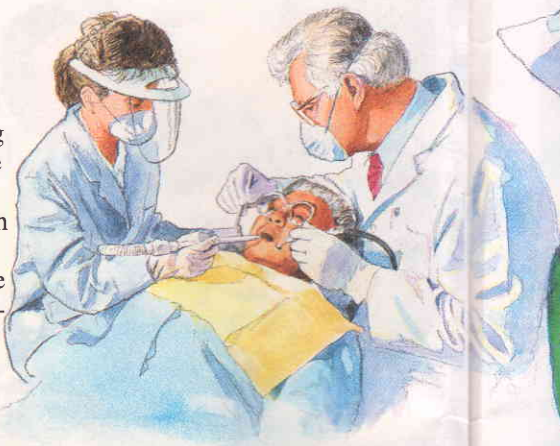
## PARTIAL DENTURE: A REMOVABLE OPTION



**Y**our dentist may recommend a partial denture if you don't have strong enough support teeth on either side of your missing teeth to support a fixed bridge. A partial denture helps to preserve the life of your remaining teeth. It consists of a removable metal framework with one or more porcelain or plastic replacement teeth attached. Unlike a fixed bridge, a partial denture can be taken out.

### Preparing for Your Denture

Your dentist designs your partial denture by first taking an impression of your opposing and surrounding teeth. To ensure that the denture fits properly, sometimes the surrounding teeth may need fillings or crowns. In some cases, oral surgery may be needed. Depending on your particular problem—such as missing front teeth or difficulty chewing—your dentist may prepare a temporary partial.



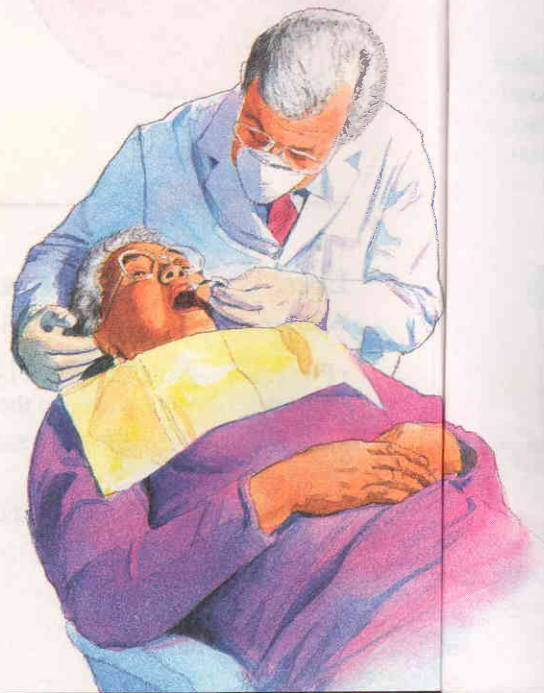
Prepared teeth



Temporary partial denture

### Between Visits

After preparing your teeth, your dentist sends the impression and detailed instructions to the dental laboratory making your partial denture. It usually takes between one and three weeks for the dental laboratory to make the framework for your partial denture. If you have a temporary partial denture, your dentist will tell you how to care for it between visits after it has been positioned in your mouth. Be sure to take the temporary partial out at night to clean it.



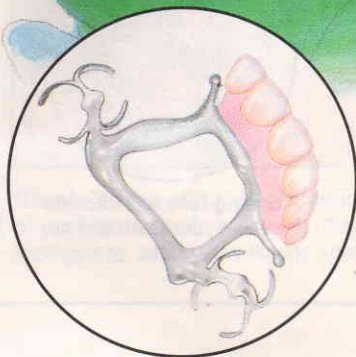


## Fitting Your Denture

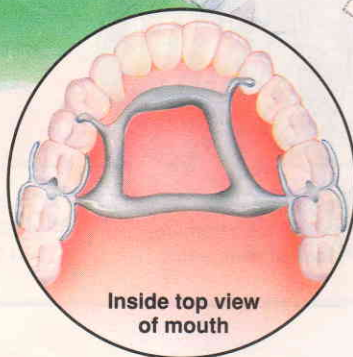
When your partial denture is ready, your dentist fits it to your mouth, checking for pressure spots on your gum, and evaluating the denture's effect on your bite and appearance. Your dentist will show you how to put the denture in and take it out, so you won't harm your natural teeth or the partial.

## Additional Visits

It may take a few more visits to make sure your partial denture fits properly against your teeth and gums. After you and your dentist are pleased with the fit, make at least one follow-up visit, so your dentist can re-check your bite and make sure your gums are healthy. Call your dentist after the follow-up visit if soreness develops.



Customized partial denture



Partial denture in place



## Living with Your Denture

There are some easy steps you can take to adjust to your partial denture.

- Practice reading out loud until your tongue adjusts to the denture.
- Be prepared for extra saliva for the first few weeks as your mouth adjusts to having something new in it.
- Eat soft foods at first to get used to eating with the denture in place.
- Clean your dentures with a special dental brush every day, and soak it daily in water to keep it from losing its shape.
- See your dentist if the denture needs adjusting or isn't comfortable. Don't adjust it yourself; it may break.

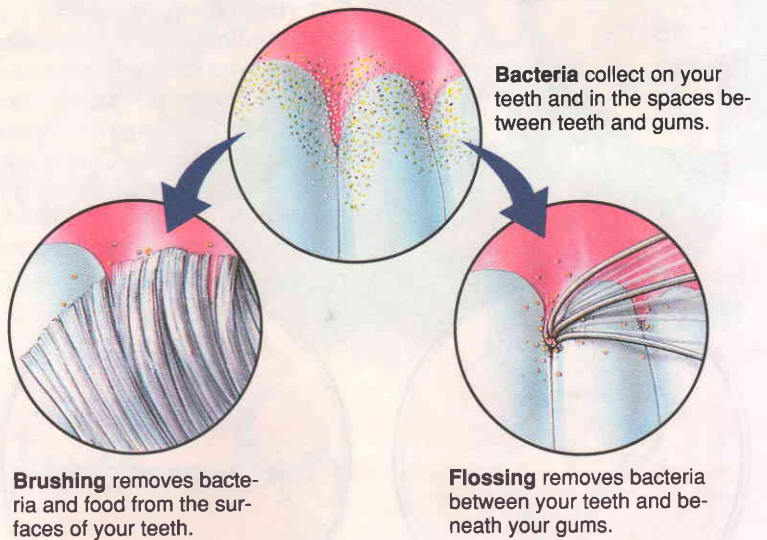
## SPECIAL CARE FOR RESTORED TEETH



**B**oth your restored and natural teeth need good home care to keep them healthy. To maintain good oral health, talk with your dentist about the right dental cleaning aids for your restored teeth, and learn how to use them. The extra effort you make to keep your restored teeth healthy means they're likely to last longer, look good, and feel good, too.

### Remove Decay-causing Germs

The best way to keep your teeth and gums in good shape is to brush and floss them each day to remove germs that cause decay. Thoroughly clean your crown, fixed bridge, or partial denture just as you would your natural teeth, preferably after eating. Use a toothbrush, floss, and other special cleaning aids your dentist may recommend.



**Brushing** removes bacteria and food from the surfaces of your teeth.

**Flossing** removes bacteria between your teeth and beneath your gums.

### Use Special Cleaning Aids

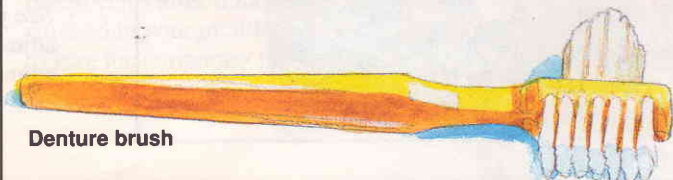
**Toothbrushes** with rounded bristles are best for cleaning crowns and natural teeth. An **interdental brush** is useful for cleaning a fixed bridge because the brush reaches easily between large spaces. **Denture brushes** have two special heads for cleaning the larger, more open surfaces of partial dentures.



Toothbrush

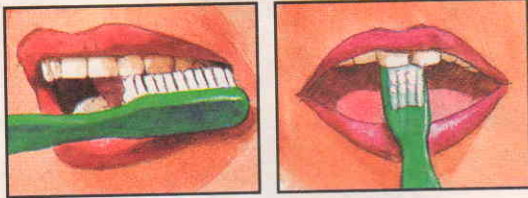


Interdental brush

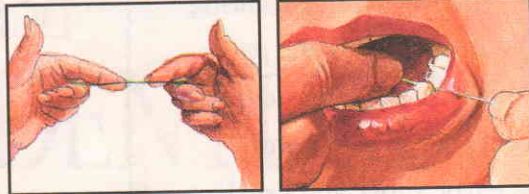


Denture brush

## Caring for Your Crown and Fixed Bridge

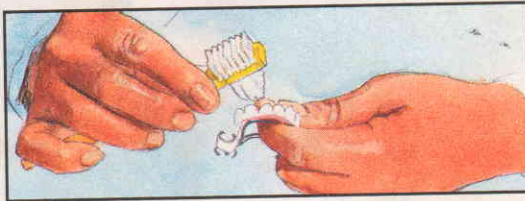


**Brush** the surface and sides of your crown or fixed bridge as thoroughly as you would natural teeth. Reach with the brush behind the teeth (the inside surface) to brush the back of crowns and fixed bridges.



**Floss** by taking about 18 inches of floss and wrapping it around your middle fingers. Gently tease the floss between your teeth and scrape it several times against each side of the tooth.

## Caring for Your Partial Denture

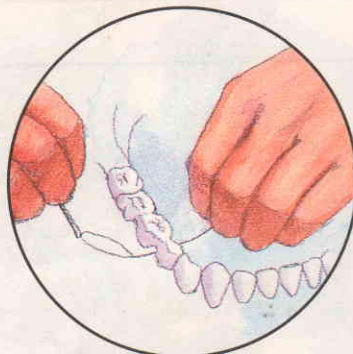
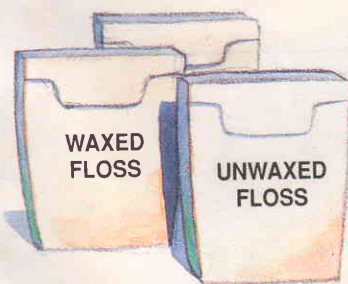


**Brush** the top surface and the inside and outside of your denture. Ask your dentist about the best toothpaste, tooth powder, or soap to use.



**Soak** your dentures in water or a denture cleaner to keep dentures from warping. Talk with your dentist about how long dentures should soak.

**Floss** that is unwaxed is best for cleaning around your crown (and natural teeth, too). Lightly waxed, thin floss is good if your teeth fit tightly together. **Special floss** that has fuzzy material on it helps clean under a fixed bridge. **Floss threaders** hold special floss or thin floss, so you can reach under a fixed bridge more easily.



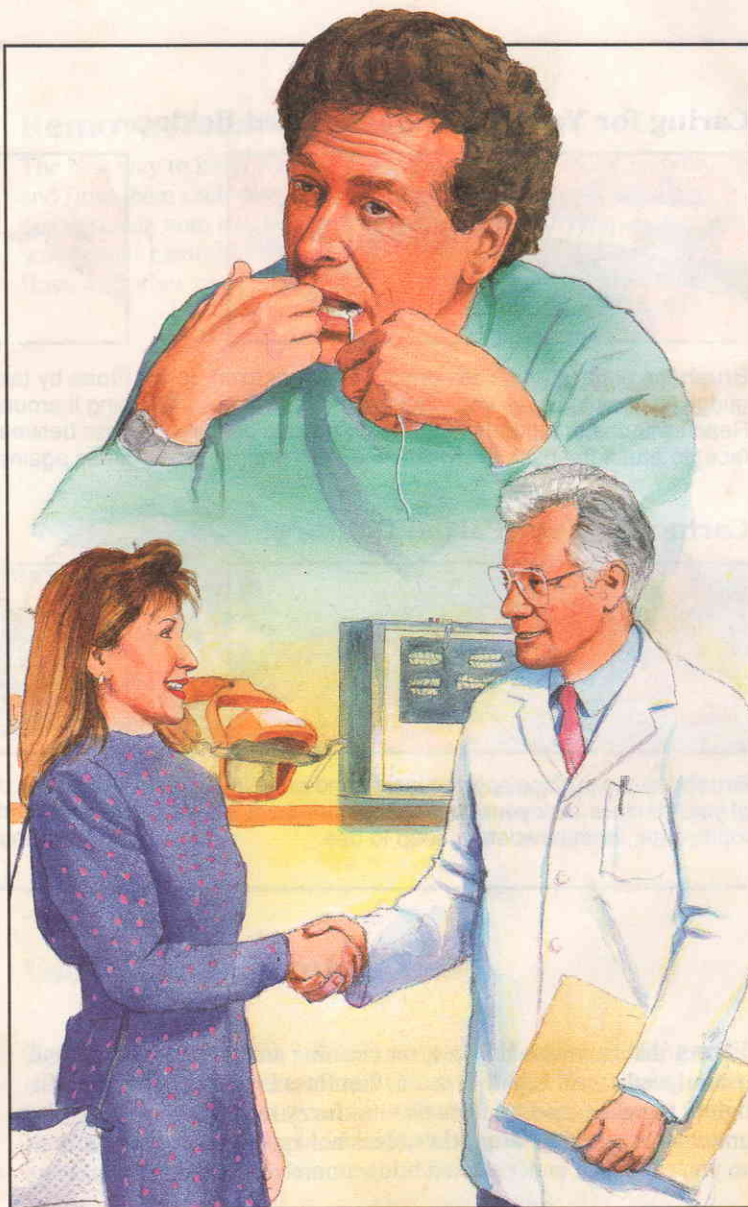
Floss threader with special floss

## Other Aids

- **Denture soaks** loosen debris and reduce odor on dentures.
- **Oral irrigators** help flush out debris from teeth and gums.
- **Dental picks** help remove debris from between teeth.
- **Mouthwash** with fluoride helps protect teeth against decay.
- **Prescription toothpastes** help protect sensitive teeth.

## DENTAL CARE: MAKE IT ROUTINE

**T**o keep your restored teeth in the best possible shape, make caring for your teeth a routine part of your life. See your dentist twice a year to catch problems early. Floss and brush daily to ward off tooth decay and gum disease. And eat balanced meals, including fresh fruits and vegetables, and avoid decay-causing sweets to help maintain healthy teeth and gums.



**KRAMES**  
COMMUNICATIONS  
MORE THAN INFORMATION...

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