

## Dental Bridges

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Dental bridges are used to replace one or more missing teeth in your mouth. Dental bridges are fixed, in that they are cemented on the supporting teeth, or in some cases fixed on the dental implant that has been placed next to the missing teeth.

### Importance of Replacing the Missing Teeth

Replacing the missing teeth will restore your ability to properly chew and speak besides its cosmetic advantage; in addition the space caused by the missing teeth may allow the surrounding teeth to shift into that space. This shifting could cause a misalignment in your bite that can result in problems with your jaw joint. These shifted teeth are harder to clean, making them more susceptible to gum disease, decay or even additional tooth loss.

### The Dental Bridge Treatment

It normally takes two or more visits for your dentist to complete your bridge. On your first visit the supporting teeth, which are typically the ones on either side of the missing tooth, are prepared. This is done to make room for the crowns that will slide over the supporting teeth. These crowns also serve as holders of the pontic, which is the missing tooth's replacement.

Next, an impression of the supporting teeth is made so a dental laboratory can custom fit the bridge. Finally a temporary dental bridge is inserted to protect the supporting teeth as well as the space between them.

On your second visit the permanent bridge is placed and adjusted to insure proper fit and function. If the fit of the bridge is satisfactory your dentist will proceed with permanently cementing the bridge into place.

### Dental Bridge Post Treatment Expectations

After the successful completion of the bridge you may feel some discomfort, mild pain when biting or sensitivity to temperature changes for a few days. As advised by your dentist, you can take over-the-counter pain medicine, such as Advil that contains ibuprofen, to alleviate the discomfort. If these symptoms persist more than a few days, visit your dentist.

### Cleaning Your Dental Bridge

The longevity of your dental bridge depends in large part on the quality of the material in the bridge, as well as your oral hygiene, diet and the health of the supporting teeth and gums. Please ask your dentist for proper brushing and flossing techniques.