

## **WHAT IS A DENTAL BRIDGE?**

A dental bridge is a fixed dental restoration used to replace one or more missing teeth by bridging the gap between adjacent teeth. It consists of two main components: the pontic (artificial tooth) and the abutments.

## **WHEN ARE DENTAL BRIDGES NEEDED?**

**Restoring Function:** Missing teeth can make it difficult to chew properly, which can affect your ability to eat certain foods. A dental bridge can help restore your ability to chew and eat comfortably.

**Improving Appearance:** Gaps in your smile due to missing teeth can affect your self-confidence and the appearance of your smile. A dental bridge can fill in these gaps, improving the overall appearance of your teeth and smile.

**Preventing Shifting of Teeth:** When you have a gap in your smile, the adjacent teeth may shift or tilt into the space over time. This can lead to bite problems and further dental issues. A dental bridge can help prevent the remaining teeth from shifting out of position.

**Maintaining Facial Structure:** Missing teeth can cause the surrounding bone to deteriorate over time, which can affect the structure of your face and lead to a sunken appearance. By filling in the gap with a dental bridge, you can help maintain the natural shape and structure of your face.

**Dental Health:** Restoring missing teeth with a dental bridge can also contribute to better overall dental health by making it easier to clean and maintain your teeth and gums. It can also help distribute biting forces evenly across your remaining teeth, reducing the risk of excessive wear or damage.

## **TYPES OF DENTAL BRIDGE**

**Traditional Dental Bridge (Fixed Bridge):** This consists of one or more artificial teeth (pontics) that are held in place by dental crowns on either side of the gap. The crowns are cemented onto the natural teeth adjacent to the gap, providing stability and support for the artificial teeth.

**Cantilever Dental Bridge:** Like a traditional bridge, but with only one adjacent tooth used as support instead of two. This type of bridge is typically used when there is only one adjacent tooth available or when the adjacent teeth are not strong enough to support a traditional bridge.

**Maryland Dental Bridge (Resin-Bonded Bridge):** In this type of bridge, the pontic is held in place by a metal or porcelain framework that is bonded to the back of the adjacent teeth. Unlike traditional bridges, Maryland bridges do not require the adjacent teeth to be significantly altered or prepared.

## **THE DENTAL BRIDGE PROCEDURE**

**Preparation:** Your teeth are prepared by your dentist, followed by impressions or a scan of your teeth. These are used to create a custom-made bridge that is tailored to fit your teeth precisely.

**Temporary Bridge:** While the permanent bridge is being fabricated in a dental laboratory, a temporary crown may be placed over the prepared tooth to protect it.

**Bridge Placement:** Once the permanent bridge is ready, it is placed over the prepared tooth and checked for fit, comfort, and aesthetics. The crown is then permanently cemented into place.



### **BENEFITS OF DENTAL BRIDGES**

**Restores Tooth Functionality:** Bridges restore the ability to chew and bite properly, especially for teeth that are damaged or weakened.

**Protects the Tooth:** Bridges provide protection against further damage or decay, preserving the underlying tooth structure.

**Improves Tooth Appearance:** Bridges can enhance the appearance of a tooth by covering imperfections such as discoloration, chips, or irregularities.

**Longevity:** With proper care, dental bridges can last for many years, providing a durable solution for restoring and preserving tooth structure.

## **HOW TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR DENTAL BRIDGE**

**Practice Good Oral Hygiene:** Brush your teeth at least twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste and floss daily. Pay special attention to the area where the crown meets the gumline to remove plaque and food debris.

**Be Gentle:** Avoid using excessive force when brushing or flossing around the crown to prevent dislodging it or damaging the surrounding teeth and gum tissue.

**Use a Soft-Bristled Toothbrush:** Choose a soft-bristled toothbrush to clean your teeth and crown gently without causing damage to the crown or the surrounding teeth.

**Avoid Hard or Sticky Foods:** Be cautious when eating hard or sticky foods that could potentially damage the crown or cause it to come loose. Avoid biting down on hard objects like ice, popcorn kernels, or pen caps.

**Wear a Night Guard (if recommended):** If you have a habit of clenching or grinding your teeth at night, your dentist may recommend wearing a night guard to protect your crown and prevent excessive wear.

**Attend Regular Dental Check-ups:** Schedule regular dental check-ups and professional cleanings with your dentist to ensure the health of your crown and the surrounding teeth.