



**Dr Lavonne Kong BDS (Melb)**

**702A Doncaster Rd, Doncaster 3108**

**Ph: (03) 9840 2963**

**E: [info@doncasterhilldental.com.au](mailto:info@doncasterhilldental.com.au)**

**[www.doncasterhilldental.com.au](http://www.doncasterhilldental.com.au)**

## **CROWNS**

### **WHAT IS A CROWN?**

Teeth can be weakened for many reasons, most commonly tooth decay, trauma to a tooth (i.e. a fall), root canal treated teeth, teeth with large fillings and teeth that are worn. A crown is a hollow shell that covers or caps a specially prepared tooth. It is usually the best way to save and strengthen a tooth that is severely weakened.

A crown restores the shape and size of a tooth, strengthening it in the process. A crown will reinforce your tooth to make sure it can tolerate chewing forces. Without a crown, your tooth will break and may need to be extracted.

### **WHAT IS A CROWN MADE OF?**

Usually the material of choice is porcelain and gold alloy. Porcelain is strong tooth-coloured material which can be made to match your natural tooth colour. It is resistant to staining and is commonly used for front teeth and also most back teeth. Gold alloy is used when more strength is required, such as for molars or if you have a strong bite (grinding).

Your dentist will give you the best option suited for your teeth.

### **HOW IS A CROWN OR BRIDGE MADE?**

Your dentist will first require x-ray examination of your mouth and detailed medical and dental history.

Sometimes, before a tooth is fit for a crown, the pre-existing filling may need to be replaced. Sometimes a root canal treatment

and post may be required also. You will need at least two visits for your crown to be made.

### **PREPARATION FOR A CROWN**

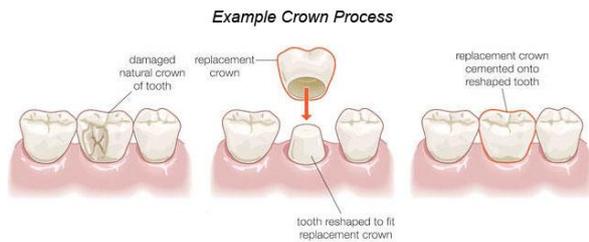
The tooth that needs a crown is firstly numbed using local anaesthetic.

The dentist will then shape the tooth using a drill, making it smaller on all sides by 1-2 millimetres. After the tooth is shaped, another more accurate impression is taken from the tooth and surrounding teeth. This new impression is then sent to a dental technician who will custom-make the crown for your tooth.

Your dentist will then make a temporary crown to cover and protect your prepared tooth, and will temporarily cement this crown on. You will need to take care not to eat on this temporary crown, because it is weak and may dislodge.

### **INSERTING THE PERMANENT CROWN**

The dentist will first need to remove your temporary crown (usually no drilling is required to do this). The new crown is then placed over the tooth and the dentist will need to check its fit and colour. If the fit and colour is right, your dentist will cement the crown onto the tooth with dental cement. This cement sets after one hour, and reaches full strength after 24 hours. Your dentist will then need to check the bite and you should let your dentist know if the bite does not feel right.



### **TAKING CARE OF YOUR CROWN**

Crowns usually last for many years. However, there is no lifetime guarantee. Factors such as good oral hygiene and biting forces can impact how long the crown lasts. It is advisable to see your dentist regularly for check-ups. As with all of your teeth, you will need to brush and floss every day. Your dentist can help you with the special care of your crown.

### **SIDE EFFECTS OF CROWNS**

#### Infection of the pulp

Whenever enamel is removed, there is a small risk that the underlying pulp may die and become infected. This can cause pain and discomfort. If this happens to your tooth, a root canal treatment may be needed.

#### Pain or discomfort

After preparation of a tooth, the tooth or the gum around it may become painful. This pain is usually temporary and should subside within 48 hours. If the pain persists, please speak to your dentist.

#### Gum disease

Plaque is more likely to accumulate around the base of the crown or bridge, and this can lead to gum disease. Advanced gum disease can result in receding gums and even the loss of a tooth.

In order to prevent gum disease, you will need to have excellent oral hygiene including flossing your teeth every day, and you are advised to see your dentist for regular check-ups.

#### Breakage of a tooth during preparation

If your tooth is very weak, it may break during preparation. This can be rectified by replacing the existing filling but if your tooth is deemed

to be too weak to take a crown, your dentists may recommend extraction.

**The information presented on this leaflet is only a summary of crowns and should therefore be used only as a guide. It does not replace personal discussion with your dentist. Should you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact us for advice. Please call us on 9840 2963.**