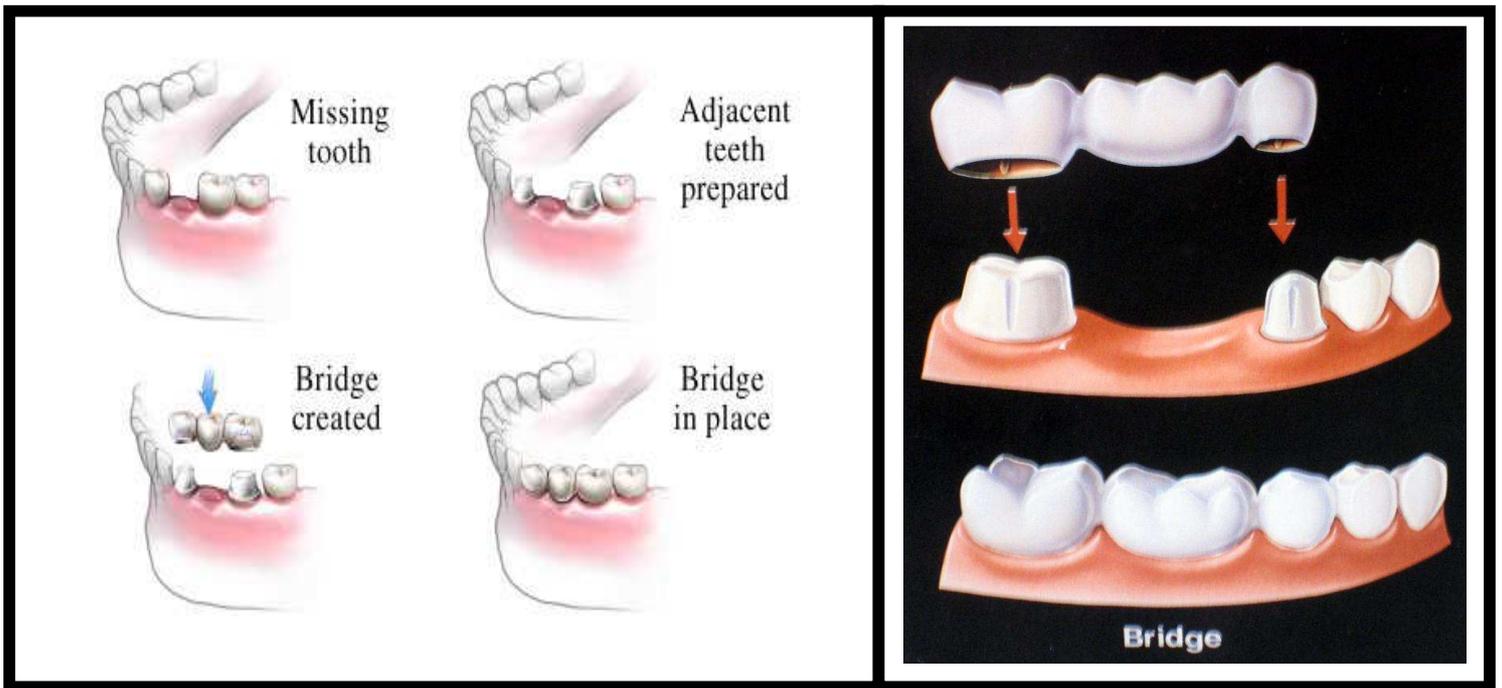


BRIDGE



What is a Bridge?

Most bridges are fixed prosthetic devices. Unlike removable devices such as dentures, which you can take out and clean daily, bridges are cemented onto existing teeth or implants, and can only be removed by a dentist. *Please be aware that an implant, root canal, permanent filling, post & core, crown lengthening, bridge, and a crown are considered separate procedures and each has its own service charge.*

How do Bridges Work?

A bridge may be recommended if you're missing one or more teeth. Gaps left by missing teeth eventually cause the remaining teeth to rotate or shift into the empty spaces, resulting in a bad bite. The imbalance caused by missing teeth can also lead to gum disease and temporomandibular joint (TMJ) disorders.

Bridges are commonly used to replace one or more missing teeth. They span the space where the teeth are missing. Bridges are cemented to the natural teeth or implants surrounding the empty space. These teeth, called **abutments**, serve as anchors for the bridge. A replacement tooth, called a **pontic** (missing tooth), is attached to the crowns that cover the abutments. As with crowns, you have a choice of materials for bridges. Your dentist can help you decide which to use, based on the location of the missing tooth (or teeth), its function, aesthetic considerations and cost. Porcelain or ceramic bridges can be matched to the color of your natural teeth.

What Types of Dental Bridges Are Available?

There are three main types of dental bridges: Traditional bridges involve creating a crown for the tooth or implant on either side of the missing tooth, with a pontic in between. Traditional bridges are the most common type of bridge and are made of either porcelain fused to metal or ceramics. Cantilever bridges are used when there are adjacent teeth on only one side of the missing tooth or teeth. Maryland bonded bridges (also called a resin-bonded bridge or a Maryland bridge) are made of plastic teeth and gums supported by a metal framework. Metal wings on each side of the bridge are bonded to your existing teeth.

How are Bridges Made?

Before a bridge can be made, the teeth must be reduced in size so that the bridge will fit over it properly. After reducing the teeth, your dentist will take an impression to provide an exact mold for the bridge. If porcelain is to be used, your dentist will determine the correct shade for the bridge to match the color of your existing teeth.

Using this impression, a dental lab then makes your bridge, in the material your dentist specifies. A temporary bridge will be put in place to cover the prepared tooth while the permanent bridge is being made. When the permanent bridge is ready, the temporary bridge is removed, and the new bridge is cemented over your prepared teeth.

Will my Crown or Bridge ever need to be replaced?

While a crown or bridge can last a lifetime, they do sometimes come loose or fall out. The most important step you can take to ensure the longevity of your crown or bridge is to practice good oral hygiene. A crown or bridge can lose its support if the teeth or bone holding it in place are damaged by dental disease. Keep your gums and teeth healthy by Brushing with fluoride toothpaste twice a day and flossing daily. Also see your dentist and hygienist regularly for checkups and cleanings. To prevent damage to your crown or bridge, avoid chewing hard foods, ice, hard candy, or other hard objects.