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Dental Bridges

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What is a dental bridge?

A bridge is a porcelain tooth which is fused between two porcelain crowns to replace a missing tooth. The two crowns to which hold the porcelain tooth are cemented onto the prepared teeth at either side of the missing tooth.

Bridgework can replace one or more missing teeth and can also be an ideal replacement for a partial denture when possible. Once a bridge has been cemented in place it cannot be removed as a denture would.



What type of bridges are available?

There are several different types of bridges available, Fixed bridges, Cantilever bridges and Maryland bridges.

Fixed bridges are the bridges described in the first paragraph above and as shown below :



Before bridgework



After bridgework

Cantilever bridges are used for replacing teeth which have no teeth present on one side of the missing tooth.

Maryland bridges are a replacement porcelain tooth with metal wing attachments on either side. These metal attachments are cemented to the back surface of the teeth on either side of a missing tooth. One of the main advantages of a Maryland bridge is that the natural teeth on either side are relatively undisturbed. The disadvantages is that they are more likely to come loose than a more conventional bridge.



Before a Maryland Bridge



After a Maryland Bridge

What is the treatment involved when having bridgework?

Once you and your dentist have decided that bridgework is the best course of treatment for you, an appointment will be arranged for the preparation. Please note that some NHS bridges may require prior approval from the dental practice board.

Your first appointment will involve the preparation if the necessary teeth to which the bridge will be attached. For a conventional three unit bridge the teeth on either side of the space will firstly have to be reduced to make enough space to enable the bridge to be cemented. Once this preparation has been finalised, impressions are then taken and sent to the laboratory where the bridge will be cast in precious metal and porcelain.

Your dentist will place a temporary bridge for you to wear until your next appointment, this is usually as similar as possible to your teeth before any preparation was carried out.

On your second appointment, your dentist will show you the bridge which has been made for you. The temporary bridge will be removed, usually quite easily and your new bridge will be tried in without any cement. The dentist will check the fit of the bridge and the colour and only if you are happy with the finished product will it then be permanently cemented.

Your dentist may recommend super-floss for cleaning under your bridge. Please ask the receptionist who will be happy to assist you with this.