

BROKEN TEETH? CAN WE PREVENT THEM?

There are many people with heavily filled teeth, quite commonly the 'baby boomers', who have retained their own teeth but are now having ongoing trouble with these teeth fracturing. At **Eastbourne Dental Centre** we see these on a far too common daily basis. However you can be proactive and act to prevent ongoing trouble in these teeth.

If a tooth is heavily filled, often the filling will not protect the remaining tooth structure and general stresses over time act to weaken the remaining tooth and cause the cusp/s to fracture.

The common symptoms of a tooth that has 'cracks' and the potential to fracture are pain on biting and pressure and sensitivity to temperature.

In these instances (ie. Teeth that are either fractured/symptomatic or with potential to fracture) it is often recommended a crown be placed on the tooth to both restore the tooth and to protect it from these stresses, hence preserving the remaining tooth structure.

Root filled teeth are especially weakened and brittle and it are recommended that most posterior teeth that are root filled be crowned. If you are of the mindset 'wait until it breaks' then see what can be done, unfortunately all too commonly these teeth can be deemed unrestorable.

What is a **CROWN**? A crown can be loosely defined as a 'tooth-shaped' cap, which fits over your whole tooth. By encompassing it as such it acts to protect it from the daily accumulative stresses, causing fracture and it is also used to improve cosmetics on occasions.

There are several types of crowns used in dentistry today.

The strongest material used for crowns in the back of the mouth, where a natural appearance is not essential is gold. Elsewhere in the mouth they are usually made of porcelain either solely or may have a gold or other metal core for additional strength.

To have a crown made for your tooth the dentist reduces the size of the original filling and tooth to make room for the new crown, a mould is taken and a temporary cover placed while the crown is made by the technician, which takes approximately 2 weeks. Sometimes the filling in the tooth is replaced at this time or prior to crown preparation, to check for underlying decay or for increased strength of the foundation and increased retention for the crown.

If the filling is smaller but the remaining tooth still needs protection then an onlay can be used. An **ONLAY** is like a 'part' crown and preserves more original tooth structure. It covers the entire biting surface again acting to protect the underlying tooth from stresses and fractures. The onlay however can only be used in fewer appropriate cases.

Placing a crown or onlay on your tooth, will act to protect the tooth structure from the stresses that cause our teeth to fracture. It is very important to be proactive in a preventative sense and you could be saving yourself lots of time, money and possible tooth loss in the future.

Eastbourne Dental Centre provides all the above treatment options along with all other aspects of modern dentistry.

For enquires and appointments contact **Eastbourne Dental Centre**, cnr Marine Pde and Rimu St, Eastbourne, ph 5627506.