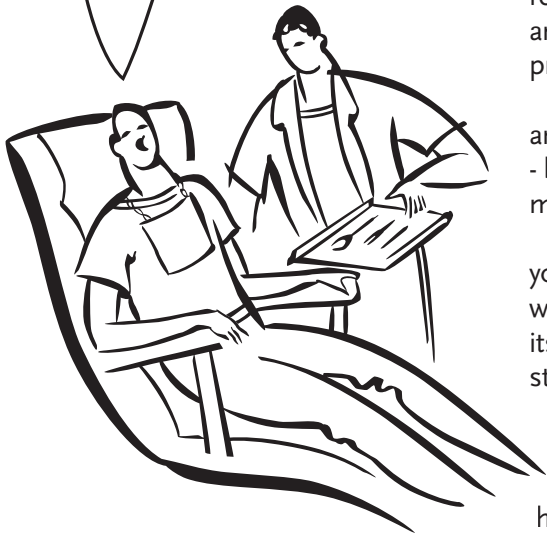


*Ask your
Dentist!*

*“What is
Periodontal
Disease?”*



Every day, plaque forms on your teeth. Periodontal Disease begins when bacterial infection caused by the plaque inflames gum tissue around your teeth and below the gumline where you can't see. This is usually a painless process. Over time, gum tissue and bone that support your teeth become destroyed. If left untreated, the condition often leads to tooth loss.

Am I at risk?

It's estimated that as many as eight out of ten Canadian adults suffer from some form of Periodontal Disease. If you smoke, have diabetes, or if you've never made a habit of flossing your teeth each day, you may be at even greater risk.

What are the warning signs?

At first, Periodontal Disease has few symptoms. As it progresses, you might notice your gums bleed easily, especially when you are brushing your teeth. You might notice that your gums are quite red, instead of their normally healthy pink colour, and you may suffer from bad breath or a bad taste in your mouth. You should see your dentist right away.

These are all signs that Periodontal Disease is creating pockets by attacking the gums and the bones that support your teeth.

How can I prevent it?

Periodontal Disease can almost always be prevented. Basic home care and regular visits to your dentist for an examination and a professional cleaning are the best ways to start. And if you smoke, consider quitting. Tobacco use promotes Periodontal Disease.

Brush your teeth at least twice a day with a soft-bristle toothbrush and floss daily. Dental floss cleans the areas your toothbrush can't reach - between your teeth and under the gumline. Rinsing with an antibacterial mouthrinse can help, but does not replace flossing.

A professional cleaning in your dental office will remove the plaque you've missed and the hard tartar you can't remove yourself. Your dentist will also check for early warning signs that Periodontal Disease is creeping its way into spots you can't see. In its earliest stages, Periodontal Disease can often be reversed.

Can Periodontal Disease be treated?

Prevention is the best method of making sure your teeth and gums stay healthy, but if Periodontal Disease is discovered after the early stages it can often be successfully stopped. Possible treatment includes root planing (deep cleaning) and in some cases periodontal surgery to the "pockets" beneath the gumline or to regenerate damaged tissue. Your dentist may refer you to a dental specialist called a Periodontist for further treatment.



*Information courtesy of your
dentist and the Nova Scotia
Dental Association
www.healthyteeth.org*

*Ask your
Dentist!*

*“What is
a Dental
Crown?”*



At some point, your dentist may recommend that you receive a Dental Crown. A dental crown, sometimes also called a “cap”, is a custom-made restoration covers most of your existing natural tooth once the tooth has been properly shaped and prepared by your dentist.

The crown can either be made of porcelain, porcelain over a metal shell or made entirely of metal, usually gold.

Why do I need a Dental Crown?

A Dental Crown is often the best solution to replace large, worn fillings, repair a tooth that has cracked, has a very large cavity or has undergone Root Canal treatment. The crown covers and provides increased protection for the natural tooth beneath it.

How is a Dental Crown fitted?

Because a Dental Crown must be custom hand-crafted to fit your bite and match your other remaining teeth, it may take more than one appointment for your dentist to fit you with a crown.

During the first appointment, diagnostic moulds and x-rays are taken to evaluate the tooth. This will determine if the tooth requires any treatment prior to starting the crown. The second appointment will involve shaping and preparing the tooth for the crown. An impression (or a “mould”) is taken of the tooth, and from it a model is poured. Your crown is made from this model, (it can take 1 - 2 weeks) and during this time a temporary crown is placed on the tooth. The temporary crown is designed to protect your tooth and gum between visits, but is not durable enough to last a long time.

When your crown is ready, your dentist will remove the temporary crown, clean away the temporary cement and check the fit of the new crown. If everything is acceptable, the crown will then be cemented to your tooth.

Once your new crown is in place, you may experience a mild sensitivity to hot or cold temperatures on the tooth for several weeks. This is only temporary and should subside on its own.

What if I have problems with my Dental Crown?

A Dental Crown is a long-lasting restoration that should give you many years of trouble-free use. You should take care of it as you would any of your natural teeth - with good home care and professional checkups.

If, however, you do experience problems, contact your dentist right away. Your dentist will be glad to answer any of your questions and ensure everything is satisfactory.



*Information courtesy of your
dentist and the Nova Scotia
Dental Association*
www.healthyteeth.org

*Ask your
Dentist!*

*“What are
dental bridges
& implants?”*



Because your teeth are meant for life, it's important to have a complete set for proper speaking and chewing. Missing teeth can cause unnatural wear on adjacent teeth and can affect the way you talk, eat and smile. For that reason, replacing a missing tooth or teeth is important. Two methods of restoration are Dental Bridges and Dental Implants.

What's a Dental Bridge?

A bridge involves one or more false teeth that are permanently held in place by surrounding healthy, natural teeth. Fitting you with a Dental Bridge begins with your dentist filing and shaping the surrounding teeth. A dental laboratory prepares the Dental Bridge to fit into the space your dentist has prepared. Fitting and placing the Dental Bridge can take several appointments with your dentist or a dental specialist called a Prosthodontist.

What's a Dental Implant?

A Dental Implant is a substitute for your natural tooth root. A small, metal post takes the place of the root and provides a place to attach an artificial tooth, or in some cases, a group of artificial teeth over a number of implanted posts.

Either your family dentist or a dental specialist will assess your overall condition and discuss what options are available to you. If you are in good overall health, you have good oral health and the bone in your jaw is strong enough to support a Dental Implant, it may be presented to you as a treatment option. Your dentist may refer you to a specialist for the initial placement of the implant.

Placing a Dental Implant takes a number of dental appointments. The process begins with surgically inserting the implant into the jaw. Once the bone and the implant have firmly fused together, a replacement tooth is constructed and fitted into place. A completed Dental Implant will look, feel and function like a natural tooth.

How do I care for a Dental Bridge or an Implant?

Dental bridges and implants need to be cared for like your natural teeth - with regular brushing, flossing and dental checkups. If you have a Dental Bridge, your dentist will show you how to use a special "floss threader" to make certain you're cleaning in and around it.

Are Dental Bridges and Implants permanent?

Your natural teeth are the most permanent option for a lifetime of smiling, chewing and speaking. However, if keeping a natural tooth is not possible, Dental Bridges and Dental Implants are both long-lasting solutions that should provide years of trouble-free service if they are cared for.



Information courtesy of
your dentist and
the Nova Scotia Dental Association
www.healthyteeth.org

*Ask your
Dentist!*

*“What do
I do in a dental
emergency?”*



The wearing of a properly fitted, professionally made mouthguard can greatly reduce the chances of sustaining a dental injury while playing sports. However, many dental emergencies occur outside of sports, especially during childhood years. Falls are common in children between the ages of two to ten, and knowing what to do in a dental emergency is important.

What if a tooth gets knocked out?

A tooth that's knocked out on the ground might be dirty, but should only be rinsed gently in cool water – not scrubbed clean! Gently replace the knocked out tooth in its socket and hold it carefully in place. If this can't be done, either tuck it beneath the tongue or in a small container of saline. It's very important to get to the dentist quickly (within 30 minutes if possible) as the chance of successfully re-implanting the tooth reduces as time passes.

What about a toothache?

Try using dental floss to dislodge any food trapped around a tooth that is aching, or rinse with warm water. Take over-the-counter pain medication, but never place an aspirin directly on the tooth or gum as it can cause tissue damage. Contact your dentist right away.

How can I treat a bitten lip or tongue?

Direct pressure with a clean cloth should help slow the bleeding. Cold compresses will ease any swelling. If the injury is severe, go right away to the local hospital emergency room or contact your family physician or dentist.

What should I do if an accident breaks a tooth?

If the accident was the result of a fall, very gently clean any dirt or debris from the injured area by rinsing with warm water. Contact your dentist as soon as possible to have your condition assessed.

Is there anything I should do to remove something stuck between my teeth?

Dental floss, used carefully to avoid cutting the gum, is the best way to try and remove an object lodged between two teeth. Never attempt it with a sharp or pointed instrument. If unsuccessful, contact your family dentist.



*Information courtesy of
your dentist and the
Nova Scotia Dental Association
www.healthyteeth.org*

*Ask your
Dentist!*

*“What is
Root Canal
Therapy?”*



Root Canal Therapy, also referred to as an Endodontic treatment, is one method of saving a damaged tooth by treating the nerve (sometimes called the pulp) in the tooth's centre. A Root Canal is generally successful at saving a tooth.

Either your dentist or a dental specialist called an Endodontist will perform the Root Canal Therapy. The procedure usually starts with isolating the damaged tooth and numbing it. An opening is made through the chewing surface of the tooth and the damaged pulp is carefully removed from its canal inside the tooth. The canal is cleaned, shaped and enlarged.

Each Root Canal procedure is different, and sometimes your dentist or Endodontist will decide to place a filling material in the root canal right away, and a temporary filling or restoration in the tooth's chewing surface. If you are prescribed any medications or antibiotics, it is important that you take them.

At the next dental appointment, your dentist or Endodontist will make certain any infection is completely gone, and the root canal and tooth surface will be permanently filled and sealed. If the tooth had a large filling, you may require a dental cap or crown, and additional appointments may be necessary.

When the procedure is finished, you and your dentist will have succeeded in saving one of your most valuable assets - a natural tooth.

Why do I need Root Canal Therapy?

Your teeth are living things, just like your fingers or toes or other body parts that have living cells and nerves and require oxygen. Sometimes the nerve in the tooth's centre becomes damaged due to an injury to the tooth or from deep decay. An abscess forms as the nerve becomes infected with bacteria. Eventually the nerve will die and cause serious damage to the surrounding bone and gums. Root Canal Therapy will usually be successful at saving the tooth.

Why should I save a damaged tooth?

Our teeth are meant for life, and saving a natural tooth is usually the best option over time. Patients who suffer tooth loss often find an unpleasant change in the way they speak, chew, smile and interact with others. A missing tooth puts unnatural strain on adjacent teeth and can lead to further tooth loss. While many patients are well-served by false teeth (dental implants, bridges and dentures to name a few), the best option for your continued good health is to save your natural teeth.

What if I have further questions?

Your dentist is there to answer any questions you might have - before or after you undergo Root Canal Therapy. Don't hesitate to bring your concerns to him or her.



**Information courtesy of your
dentist and the Nova Scotia
Dental Association
www.healthyteeth.org**

*Ask your
Dentist!*

*“How can
we get whiter
teeth?”*



If the colour of your teeth isn't as white as you'd like it to be, you're not alone. Certain prescription drugs, coffee and tea intake or tobacco use can cause teeth to darken or discolour. Some of us simply have teeth with a natural colour that's not as white as we would like. What can be done? Tooth Bleaching, application of Veneers and Bonding to tooth surfaces are three popular methods for your dentist to help you whiten your teeth.

What is Tooth Bleaching?

Tooth Bleaching is the application of a chemical agent to whiten the enamel of your teeth. The process generally involves the night-time wear of custom-made mouth trays. Ask your dentist if you might be a candidate for tooth bleaching.

Is Tooth Bleaching safe?

Because bleaching agents are designed only for use on your tooth enamel, interaction with your roots, gums and other soft tissue should be kept at a minimum. For this reason, it's advised that you only have your teeth bleached under the supervision of your dentist. Home "do-it-yourself" kits might place your roots, gums and soft tissue at risk. However, having your teeth bleached by your dentist is one safe method of achieving that whiter, brighter smile.

What is a Veneer?

For some patients, Tooth Bleaching isn't the answer to achieving whiter teeth. Depending upon the reason for the tooth's discolouration, bleaching might not be enough to get the job done. Your dentist may recommend the application of a Veneer as an alternative or in addition to tooth whitening.

A Veneer, generally made of porcelain, is a tooth-shaped "facing" that your dentist can attach to the surface of your natural tooth with a durable cement. Veneers are custom-made to the desired shape and colour of your tooth. The application is painless and the veneer itself should last 7-10 years.

What about Bonding?

Like the application of a Veneer, Bonding is a process of applying a cover over a discoloured tooth surface. During the process, your dentist will apply a tooth-coloured plastic resin to the tooth that is bonded and sculpted to the proper shape.

What's best for me?

Ask your dentist what's best to whiten your teeth. The procedures that your dentist will recommend can give you that attractive white smile for years to come.



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dentist and the Nova Scotia
Dental Association
www.healthyteeth.org*