



Why Replace Missing Teeth?

Normal arrangement of teeth immediately following the removal of one tooth.



The most important consideration in most cases is that a missing tooth reduces the effective chewing surfaces. This increases the chewing forces on the remaining teeth. This can accelerate the decline of the remaining teeth.

With time, if even one tooth is missing, the space may cause:

- Teeth in front of space to drift back, creating spaces in between front teeth.
- Teeth behind the missing tooth space to tilt forward.
- Tooth above the missing tooth space to erupt down.

Because these teeth drift out of position, several conditions may occur:

- Severe occlusal (bite) problems that could lead to clicking of the jaw, headaches, and jaw pain.
- Hard to clean areas are created which will lead to tooth decay, gum disease, and bone loss.
- Eventually, the teeth may move far enough out of position that replacements cannot be made.

How to replace missing teeth:

Fixed Bridge

- A fixed bridge is either cemented in place over the adjacent teeth just like a single crown or bonded to adjacent teeth, depending upon the circumstances.
- They are not removable.
- As in a crown, a bridge can be made of white porcelain, gold, a silver-colored metal, or a combination of these.

Removable Partial

- A removable partial is inserted and removed by the patient.
- It is held in place by metal clasps surrounding your natural teeth.
- It can be used in place of a fixed bridge or in cases where a fixed bridge cannot be used.

Implants

- In most cases today, implants are a good choice for a tooth.
- Implants are very predictable and successful.
- Drilling adjacent teeth is avoided.
- There are two phases:
 - Surgical, where a titanium fixture is placed into the jawbone.
 - Reconstruction after healing (3 to 6 months), where the replacement is fabricated over the integrated titanium fixture.