

# Why replace missing teeth?

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



\*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:
  - 1) Surgical, where a titanium fixture is placed into the jawbone.
  - 2) Reconstruction after healing (3 to 6 months), where the replacement is fabricated over the integrated titanium fixture.