

COSMETIC DENTISTRY

Bridges

What are bridges?

Bridges are false teeth anchored onto neighbouring teeth in order to span gaps left by one or more missing teeth. The replacement teeth are known as pontics or ‘false’ teeth and are fixed to natural teeth or implants either side of the gap, known as abutments.

What are the benefits of bridges?

- They can restore your smile
- They can restore function so you can chew properly
- They can prevent other remaining teeth from drifting out of position

Are there different types of bridges?

Yes. **Conventional fixed bridges** are the most common and involve fusing a pontic or false tooth to crowns cemented to natural teeth or implants either side of the gap. They can be made of porcelain, usually bonded to metal, or entirely of metal, usually gold. The adjacent natural teeth are prepared like a crown preparation and a temporary bridge is usually fitted while the laboratory constructs the new bridge.

Bridges are often used when a person is not missing enough teeth to need a full or partial denture



Adhesive bridges use metal wings to glue the false tooth onto the surface enamel of an adjacent abutment. These bridges are commonly used to replace missing upper lateral incisors, for example after orthodontics, where the wing is glued to the back of the adjacent canine tooth.

These bridges are usually cheaper and preserve more tooth structure, as they require little or no preparation, but the abutment tooth needs to be strong and healthy and should not have any large fillings.

Adhesive bridges can be used to replace missing upper lateral incisors with little or no tooth reduction



How long do bridges last?

We cannot give an exact length of time that a bridge will last as this will depend on the condition of your mouth, gums and bite, but they can last 10 years or more.

Bridges and crowns can occasionally come loose or fall out. Always contact the practice straight away if this happens as we may be able to recement them. Good oral hygiene and diet are particularly important to keep bridges and crowns free from gum disease and decay around the margins, so visit your dentist and hygienist regularly for check ups and professional cleaning. This will help your bridge or crown last longer.

Are there alternatives to bridges?

Dentures or implants are the other alternatives to bridges for replacing missing teeth. However, we can advise you as to which option is most suitable for you and how much it will cost, so please speak to your dentist.