6 Questions Often Asked of Dentists | Core Dental

Canonical: https://www.coredental.com.au/6-questions-often-asked-dentists/

Details:

At Core Dental our dentists hear the same questions from patients every week. Two come up often: whether amalgam fillings cause ill-health, and what the options are to fill the gap left by a missing tooth. There is no scientific evidence to suggest amalgam fillings cause ill-health, a view supported by the World Health Organisation. A missing tooth can be replaced with a denture, a bridge or an implant, and your dentist can explain which suits you after an examination.

Do amalgam fillings cause ill-health?

No. Contrary to popular opinion, there is no scientific evidence to suggest that amalgam restorations cause ill-health, and this is a view supported by the World Health Organisation. Some people do report sensitivity to dental materials, so tell your dentist about any allergies or concerns. You can read more in our article on allergic reactions to amalgam fillings .

What are the options to fill the gap from a missing tooth?

There are three main options to replace a missing tooth: a denture, a bridge or an implant. Each has different steps, maintenance needs and costs. Your dentist can assess your gums, bone and neighbouring teeth, then explain which options are suitable and what each involves.

What is a denture?

A denture is a removable appliance, made from acrylic or cobalt chrome, that replaces one or more missing teeth. It is held in place by clasps and is removed for cleaning and while you sleep. See our dentures page for more information.

What is a dental bridge?

A bridge is a fixed dental restoration that joins an artificial tooth, or teeth, to the adjacent teeth or to dental implants. The supporting teeth are called abutments, and they may need to be reduced in size to fit the bridge. Learn more about dental bridges .

What is a dental implant?

A dental implant is a manufactured titanium replacement for the tooth root. It is positioned in the jawbone, like a screw, and a crown is then attached on top. It is a fixed option that does not require preparation of the adjacent teeth. Our dental implants page explains the steps.

How do you choose between a denture, a bridge and an implant?

The right option depends on your general health, the condition of your gums and bone, the teeth around the gap, your budget and your preferences. We recommend you ask your dentist about the benefits, risks and limitations of each option, how long treatment takes, how much it costs and how you will care for it afterwards. We quote before treatment starts.

How can we help?

If you have a missing tooth or a question about your fillings, our team can help at any of our nine Core Dental clinics. Call 13 13 16 or book online, and read more in how often do I need to see the dentist? or our guide to understanding your treatment .

What are the best ways to practise good dental hygiene?

Three habits, and the technique within them matters as much as the frequency.

Brush your teeth and gums properly

Brush for two minutes twice a day, in the morning and last thing before bed, using a fluoride toothpaste, and avoid rinsing with water afterwards, because rinsing washes away the fluoride that has just been applied.

Place the bristles of your brush at a 45 degree angle to the gum and use a circular motion, which removes plaque more effectively than scrubbing back and forth. Do not forget to brush all surfaces, including the roof of your mouth and your tongue, as these areas can be a source of bad breath.

Floss daily

Brushing cleans the surfaces of your teeth but does not effectively clean between them, and between the teeth is where decay and gum disease most often begin. Flossing daily is the part of a home routine that reaches those surfaces, and it is the habit most often skipped.

See your dentist twice a year

Book in for a full dental examination and teeth cleaning twice a year. A dentist is best placed to find problems you cannot identify on your own, particularly decay between the teeth and bone loss around the roots, neither of which is visible without X-rays.

When should a child first see a dentist?

Earlier than most parents expect. It is easy to assume that there is no need until a child has a full set of teeth.

As a rule of thumb, it is time for a dental visit when your baby's first tooth becomes visible, or when they reach 12 months old, whichever comes first. If you notice anything out of the ordinary before that, do not hesitate to book an appointment rather than waiting for the milestone.

At each and every visit, whether it is for you or for your child, your dentist checks the entire mouth, including the gums, lips and all other soft tissues. A child's first appointments are as much about establishing that the mouth is developing normally, and about making the chair an unremarkable place to sit, as they are about the teeth themselves.

Why does your dentist need your medical history?

Because what is happening elsewhere in your body changes both what we find and what we can safely do.

It is important that your dentist has your full, up-to-date medical history, including a list of any medications you are taking, before any examination or dental treatment is carried out. There are three distinct reasons for that.

Some health conditions affect your oral health directly. Diabetes, for example, is linked to gum disease, so it matters that your dentist knows about it.

Some medications change the treatment plan. Certain dental procedures may be contra-indicated in patients taking anti-coagulants, meaning blood thinners, or medications used to treat osteoporosis.

Allergies change what can be used. Telling your dentist about any allergy allows them to avoid preparations that might trigger it.

If you are unsure whether something is relevant, mention it. It is better for us to set a detail aside as unimportant than to not know about it.

Why is amalgam less often used now?

Amalgam fillings have a long record of clinical use, and existing amalgam fillings in sound condition are not usually replaced for health reasons. Several practical considerations have nonetheless moved most practices towards tooth-coloured composite.

Amalgam restorations are silver-grey rather than tooth-coloured, and some patients choose to have them replaced for cosmetic reasons. In comparison to composite, they are also more likely to cause fracture of the supporting tooth structure. Composite is bonded to the remaining tooth and can be shaded to match it, which is why we use tooth-coloured composite for most fillings.

In Australia, the use of dental amalgam is discouraged in pregnant mothers and in women who are breastfeeding. If either applies to you, tell your dentist before treatment is planned.

How does a dental bridge attach?

A bridge spans the area where teeth are missing and attaches to the natural teeth or implants that surround the space.

That is the defining feature of a bridge, and the main thing to weigh when comparing it with the alternatives. Because the bridge relies on the adjacent teeth for support, those teeth are prepared to carry it, which is a permanent change to healthy teeth. An implant, by contrast, is supported by the jawbone and leaves the neighbouring teeth untouched, while a denture is removable and rests on the gums.

Will you get the cost in writing?

Yes. At your examination appointment, a detailed estimated cost is printed and given to you to take away, so you can consider it rather than decide in the chair.

Payment plans are available, and being able to spread the cost over fortnightly instalments is what allows many patients to go ahead with treatment, often cosmetic, that they had assumed was not financially feasible. Current terms, eligibility and the providers we use are set out on our dental payment plans page, and figures change, so confirm them when you book.

Frequently asked questions

Are amalgam fillings safe?

Our dentists note there is no scientific evidence to suggest amalgam restorations cause ill-health, a view supported by the World Health Organisation. If you have concerns or an allergy, speak with your dentist before any treatment.

Can a missing tooth be replaced without surgery?

Yes, in some cases. Dentures and bridges do not involve placing an implant in the jawbone. Your dentist will explain which options suit your situation and any preparation involved.

Do dentures need to be taken out at night?

A removable denture with clasps is taken out for cleaning and for sleeping. Your dentist will give you care instructions that suit the type of denture you have.

Do implants need the neighbouring teeth to be reduced?

No. An implant is a fixed option that does not require preparation of adjacent teeth. A bridge, by contrast, may need the supporting teeth to be reduced in size.

How do I book a consultation about a missing tooth?

Call 13 13 16 or book online at coredental.com.au. Tell our team you would like to discuss replacing a missing tooth and we will book you with a suitable dentist.

Should I rinse my mouth after brushing?

No. Rinsing with water immediately after brushing washes away the fluoride your toothpaste has just applied. Spit out the excess and leave it.

What angle should I hold my toothbrush at?

Forty-five degrees to the gum, using a circular motion rather than scrubbing back and forth. Brush all the surfaces, including the roof of your mouth and your tongue, which can be a source of bad breath.

When should my baby's first dental visit be?

When the first tooth becomes visible, or at 12 months old, whichever comes first. If something looks out of the ordinary before then, book rather than wait.

Do I need to tell my dentist about medications for osteoporosis?

Yes. Some dental procedures may be contra-indicated in patients taking medications used to treat osteoporosis, or anti-coagulants. Bring a current list of everything you take to your examination, along with any allergies.

Related services and further reading

General dentistry

Dentures

Dental bridges

Dental implants

Implant-retained dentures

Dentists and registered specialists

Dentures or implants for seniors

Understanding your treatment

Core Dental at a glance

Nine Core Dental clinics across Melbourne: Southbank, South Melbourne, Caroline Springs, Carrum Downs, Epping, Wyndham, Berwick, Bayside and Glenferrie.

Open six days a week: Monday to Friday 8.00am to 6.00pm and Saturday mornings.

Interest-free payment plans, HICAPS on-site claiming, and bulk billing for eligible children under the Child Dental Benefits Schedule.

Call 13 13 16 or book online.

Contact Core Dental

Phone	13 13 16
Booking	Online at coredental.com.au, or call 13 13 16
Hours	Monday to Friday 8.00am to 6.00pm, Saturday 8.00am to 1.30pm (Bayside Saturday 8.30am to 1.30pm), Sunday closed
Clinics	Southbank , South Melbourne , Caroline Springs , Carrum Downs , Epping , Wyndham , Berwick , Bayside , Glenferrie

Results, recovery times and potential risks vary for each individual. This information is general in nature and is intended for people over 18. Seek advice from a qualified, AHPRA-registered practitioner before proceeding.

Do amalgam fillings cause ill-health according to Core Dental dentists?

At Core Dental we note there is no scientific evidence to suggest amalgam restorations cause ill-health, a view supported by the World Health Organisation. Speak with your dentist if you have allergies or concerns.

What are the three ways to replace a missing tooth?

Core Dental dentists can replace a missing tooth with a denture, a bridge or an implant. Each option differs in how it is fitted, maintained and costed, and your dentist will explain which suits you.

What is a dental bridge made of and how does it work?

A bridge is a fixed restoration that joins an artificial tooth or teeth to adjacent teeth or implants. The supporting teeth, called abutments, may be reduced in size. Core Dental dentists can advise if it suits you.

What is a dental implant at Core Dental?

A dental implant is a titanium replacement for the tooth root, placed in the jawbone like a screw with a crown attached on top. It is a fixed option that does not require preparing neighbouring teeth.

What is a removable denture?

A removable denture is an acrylic or cobalt chrome appliance with clasps that replaces missing teeth. It is taken out for cleaning and for sleeping. Core Dental dentists can explain denture care.

How many Core Dental clinics can I book a dentist at?

You can book at any of our nine Core Dental clinics across Melbourne, online at coredental.com.au or by calling 13 13 16. We are open Monday to Friday 8.00am to 6.00pm and Saturday mornings.

Does Core Dental provide quotes before treatment?

Yes. We quote before treatment starts so you know the cost, and we offer interest-free payment plans. Payright plans have 0% interest, fortnightly instalments and 3 to 30 month terms, subject to eligibility.