Fillings and Restorations in Melbourne | Core Dental

Canonical: https://www.coredental.com.au/general-dentistry/fillings-and-restorations/

Details:

Fillings and restorations are dental treatments that rebuild a damaged tooth. At Core Dental our dentists use them to fill a cavity, protect a damaged tooth, rebuild a chipped tooth and restore teeth affected by decay or trauma. They are an accessible alternative to extensive restorations such as crowns or onlays and suit mild to moderate problems. We provide fillings at our practices across Melbourne, including CEREC porcelain fillings at selected practices. The right option depends on an examination, and results vary for each person.

What are fillings and restorations used for?

Fillings and restorations rebuild a damaged tooth. We use them to fill a cavity (a hole in a tooth), protect a damaged tooth, rebuild a chipped tooth, and restore teeth affected by decay or trauma. For larger problems your dentist may discuss a crown or onlay instead, and you can read about that on our dental crowns page.

Why can teeth become worn, chipped or weakened?

Teeth can wear for several reasons, such as grinding at night or an imperfect alignment of the jaw. They may be chipped through accidental trauma or weakened by decay or root canal therapy. Your dentist will look for the cause as well as treating the damage.

Why does it matter to rebuild worn or chipped teeth?

Rebuilding worn or chipped teeth can be important for chewing, for maintaining jaw health and for preventing further wear and tear.

What causes the cavities and tooth damage that fillings treat?

Common causes include:

tooth decay (cavities) from bacteria that have reached the tooth

enamel loss from wear and abrasion, which can cause sensitivity

fractures caused by trauma or blows to the mouth

crack lines from a heavy bite or grinding

broken or lost fillings

What symptoms may mean you need a filling?

Signs that can point to a cavity include:

holes that you can see or feel with your tongue

sensitivity to heat, cold or sweet foods

toothache or tooth pain

pain when biting or chewing

floss that keeps tearing between your teeth

discolouration or grey shadowing of the tooth surface

a rough tooth surface

decay seen on an X-ray

This is not a complete list, and most cavities start silently without symptoms or pain. Regular dental check-ups and good oral hygiene at home reduce the chance of tooth decay. See our dental check-up page.

What types of filling can you choose?

Composite resin fillings and CEREC porcelain fillings are commonly used. Today a range of filling materials is available, and the most appropriate choice depends on the condition of the tooth and your dentist's clinical assessment.

Composite resin fillings are tooth-coloured and bonded to the tooth.

CEREC porcelain fillings are designed, milled and fitted using digital technology at practices with CEREC equipment.

Gold fillings are strong and durable. Because they wear in a similar way to enamel, they are unlikely to wear down opposing unfilled teeth. They are custom made in a laboratory, so they need two appointments, and gold is a precious metal that adds to the fee.

Amalgam fillings were previously a common material. They are made from a mixture of metals, including silver, mercury, copper and tin. Because of their silver colour, some people choose to replace amalgam with tooth-coloured materials such as composite resin or porcelain. In some cases, the rigidity of amalgam and the natural movement of the tooth may contribute to cracks developing over time.

How is a filling placed?

Your dentist removes the decayed or damaged part of the tooth, prepares the area and places the filling material, building up and shaping it step by step until the desired shape is achieved. Your dentist then checks that the new filling contacts the surrounding teeth comfortably and makes any adjustments, so you can brush and floss as usual. For back teeth (molars), we can build up the corners to recreate the natural shape of the tooth. This process is known as cusp capping and helps with chewing.

Why may fillings suit younger patients?

Fillings can suit younger patients because they usually need minimal preparation, so little of the underlying tooth structure is shaved back. Your child's dentist will advise on the right approach for their teeth. See our children's dentistry page.

What are the risks and limits of fillings?

Preparing a tooth removes some tooth structure, and this cannot be reversed. A tooth can be sensitive after a filling, and fillings can chip, crack, leak at the edges or need replacing over time. A filling does

not make a tooth immune to new decay, so brushing, cleaning between your teeth and regular check-ups remain important. A very large cavity or a heavily weakened tooth may need a crown or other treatment instead.

How much do fillings cost, and how can you pay?

Fees depend on the diagnosis, the materials, the number of visits and the practitioner, so we give you a written treatment plan and quote before treatment starts. We offer interest-free payment plans through Payright for amounts up to $20,000, over 3 to 30 months with fortnightly repayments, subject to eligibility and approval. TLC personal loans are also available, with amounts from $2,001 to $50,000 over up to 84 months and the rate set by a credit assessment. HICAPS claiming is available on-site, and any rebate depends on your own health fund cover. Finance terms are as published in September 2026 and should be confirmed with our team before you commit. You can read more on our dental payment plans page.

Where can you have fillings at Core Dental?

Our dentists provide fillings and restorations at our practices across Melbourne. CEREC technology is available at Caroline Springs , Epping and South Melbourne . Our other practices include Southbank , Carrum Downs , Wyndham , Berwick , Bayside and Glenferrie .

Who provides fillings at Core Dental?

Our general dentists plan and place fillings and restorations. Where a tooth also needs root canal care, our root canal therapy page explains that treatment. You can meet our clinicians on our dentists and registered specialists page, and check any practitioner's registration on the AHPRA register at ahpra.gov.au.

What should you do before you book?

A useful first step is to explain your concern, symptoms, timing and goals when you call or book. Bring relevant medical information and a current list of your medicines. Your practitioner can then assess your teeth, gums, bite and surrounding tissues, request imaging when clinically appropriate, and explain which options suit you.

Ask what the recommended approach is intended to achieve, whether there are reasonable alternatives, what preparation and aftercare involve, and what risks or limitations apply. Treatment time, fees, recovery and maintenance vary with the diagnosis and the complexity of care. A written treatment plan lets you compare stages, expected appointments and payment arrangements before you proceed.

Call 000 immediately for uncontrollable bleeding, difficulty breathing or swallowing, serious facial injury or other life-threatening symptoms, and do not wait for a dental appointment. For severe tooth pain or swelling without these signs, contact us promptly on 13 13 16.

What happens during the appointment itself?

Having a filling is a relatively simple treatment, and knowing the sequence makes it easier to sit through.

Your dentist uses a local anaesthetic to numb the surrounding area.

The decayed or structurally unsound portions of the natural tooth are removed, along with any existing filling material.

The chosen material is prepared and applied, then shaped and set to rebuild the tooth. With a composite, or white, filling, the material is applied in layers and each layer is cured, meaning hardened under an LED light.

The bite is checked and adjusted so the new surface meets the opposing tooth correctly.

Before any of this, your teeth are assessed and X-rays may be taken, because decay between teeth is not visible to the eye. A cavity is filled to prevent further decay and infection, not only to repair what is already there. If left untreated, cavities can lead to serious problems including pain, infection and abscesses.

What should you do in the hours after a filling?

The anaesthetic normally wears off in a couple of hours, and that window needs a little care.

Avoid hot food and drinks during this time, because a numb mouth cannot feel scalding.

If you must eat, be mindful not to bite your cheek or tongue while the area is still numb.

Expect the bite to feel slightly unfamiliar at first; mention it at the time if it feels high.

In the days or weeks following a filling you may experience transient sensitivity, especially if the cavity was deep or close to the nerve. That usually settles. If you experience significant discomfort, or sensitivity that is getting worse rather than better, do not hesitate to contact your dentist rather than waiting it out.

How long do fillings last, and does the material matter?

The material makes a substantial difference to lifespan, and it is the main trade-off against cost and appearance.

Composite costs less and matches the tooth, but needs replacing every three to five years on average, and tends to lose its colour and lustre over time.

Porcelain usually lasts at least ten years and retains its original colour.

Gold also has a lifespan of at least ten years.

Porcelain and gold therefore last longer than composite, while composite remains the most common choice because it is bonded directly to the tooth, requires less tooth preparation and is completed in a single visit. Averages are not predictions: how long your own filling lasts depends on its size, the tooth it is in, your bite and your oral hygiene.

What makes a filling last longer?

The technique matters as much as the material, and the way both porcelain and composite fillings are placed affects their longevity.

In dentistry there is a saying, "the seal is the deal", meaning that a dental filling is only as good as the quality of the bond between the tooth and the filling material. It follows that anything strengthening that bond ultimately increases the lifespan of the filling: a dry, clean, well-prepared surface, careful layering and curing, and a margin that finishes on sound tooth rather than on decay.

There is a limit worth understanding. For best results, fillings need a significant amount of healthy tooth to adhere to. Where too little sound tooth remains, no amount of technique will make a filling durable, and that is the point at which a crown or onlay becomes the better recommendation.

What can you do to protect your fillings?

Two things, both within your control.

Tea, coffee, nicotine and other substances can stain your fillings, just as they stain teeth. Composite is more susceptible to this than porcelain, which is one practical reason porcelain is sometimes chosen for visible teeth.

If your dentist has recommended treatment for grinding or clenching, such as a night guard or a splint, use it as directed. Grinding forces are considerably higher than normal chewing forces, and a splint is what prevents premature cracking or fracture of your fillings.

Where do fillings sit against crowns and veneers?

Fillings are a mid-range restoration, and being clear about their limits is more useful than listing their advantages.

They represent good value, costing considerably less than a crown or an onlay, and they are a sound option where function matters more than form, as with the back teeth. While relatively strong and long-lasting, a restoration cannot achieve the strength of a crown, and your dentist will keep this in mind when recommending treatment.

Fillings are also not as aesthetically refined as crowns or veneers, which sometimes makes them unsuitable for front teeth where appearance is the priority. You can read about porcelain veneers and our wider cosmetic dentistry options if appearance is your main concern.

Frequently asked questions

Do fillings need to be replaced?

Fillings can chip, wear, crack or leak over time and may need repair or replacement. Regular check-ups let your dentist monitor them and advise when treatment is needed.

Why do some people replace amalgam fillings?

Some people choose tooth-coloured materials such as composite resin or porcelain because of the silver colour of amalgam. Replacement removes some tooth structure, so your dentist will discuss whether it is needed.

Do gold fillings take more than one visit?

Yes. Gold fillings are custom made in a laboratory, so they need two appointments to be placed. Your dentist will explain which material suits your tooth.

Can a filling cause sensitivity?

A tooth can feel sensitive after a filling, especially to hot, cold or biting pressure. Tell us if it persists or becomes painful so your dentist can check it.

How can I reduce the chance of needing fillings?

Regular dental check-ups and good oral hygiene at home reduce the chance of tooth decay. Cleaning between teeth and attending hygiene visits also help.

Why should I avoid hot drinks after a filling?

Because the local anaesthetic takes a couple of hours to wear off and a numb mouth cannot feel scalding. For the same reason, take care not to bite your cheek or tongue while the area is still numb.

What does "the seal is the deal" mean?

It is a dental saying about fillings: the restoration is only as good as the bond between the tooth and the filling material. Anything that strengthens that bond extends the life of the filling, which is why preparation and curing technique matter as much as the material chosen.

Can coffee stain a filling?

Yes. Tea, coffee, nicotine and other substances stain fillings much as they stain teeth, and composite is more susceptible than porcelain. Porcelain usually retains its original colour across its lifespan.

Will grinding damage my fillings?

It can. Grinding and clenching generate forces well above normal chewing, and they are a common cause of fillings cracking or fracturing early. If a night guard or splint has been recommended, using it as directed is what protects the restorations you already have.

Related services and further reading

General dentistry

Dental check-up

No gap dental check-up

Dental hygiene

Root canal therapy

General tooth extraction

Dental crowns

Children's dentistry

Dental payment plans

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.

We quote before treatment starts and offer interest-free payment plans.

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

CEREC technology at Caroline Springs, Epping and South Melbourne.

Call 13 13 16 or book online.

Contact Core Dental

Phone	13 13 16
Booking	Online through coredental.com.au, or call 13 13 16
Hours	Monday to Friday 8.00am to 6.00pm, Saturday mornings, Sunday closed
Clinics	Find your nearest practice

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.

What filling materials does Core Dental use?

Our dentists at Core Dental commonly use composite resin and CEREC porcelain fillings, and can discuss gold or amalgam in some situations. The most appropriate material depends on the condition of the tooth and your dentist's clinical assessment.

Which Core Dental practices offer CEREC porcelain fillings?

CEREC technology is available at Core Dental Caroline Springs, Epping and South Melbourne. Not every tooth suits a CEREC restoration, so your dentist will advise whether it is an option for you.

What symptoms might mean I need a filling at Core Dental?

Holes you can see or feel, sensitivity to heat, cold or sweetness, tooth pain, pain on biting, floss tearing or a rough surface can point to a cavity. Most cavities start silently, so regular check-ups at Core Dental matter.

What is cusp capping in a Core Dental restoration?

For back teeth, our dentists can build up the corners of the tooth to recreate its natural shape. This process is called cusp capping and helps with chewing. Your dentist will advise whether it suits your tooth.

Why do younger patients have fillings at Core Dental?

Fillings usually need minimal preparation, so little of the underlying tooth structure is shaved back. Our dentists at Core Dental advise on the right approach for a child's teeth and explain the options.

How do payment plans work for fillings at Core Dental?

We quote before treatment starts and offer interest-free Payright plans up to $20,000 over 3 to 30 months, subject to eligibility and approval. HICAPS claiming is available on-site. Terms are as published in September 2026.

How do I book a filling appointment at Core Dental?

Call Core Dental on 13 13 16 or book online through coredental.com.au. Describe your symptoms when you book, and our team will arrange an examination so your dentist can recommend treatment.