



## THE BLOCKLEY PARTNERSHIP

*Working together for your dental health*

### Bridges

A bridge is a prosthesis that replaces one or more missing teeth. It is permanently fixed into the mouth and uses a tooth or teeth adjacent to the missing tooth or teeth for its support. This can be done in a number of ways.

One of the most common types is a conventional three-unit bridge. The teeth either side of a one-tooth gap are prepared for crowns and then a three-unit bridge (two crowns and one false tooth that are all linked together) is made and permanently cemented.

Bridges can also be cantilevered. This is when teeth on only one side of the gap are used for support.

Adhesive bridges are another kind of bridge where the neighbouring teeth are used to support the false tooth, but where little or no preparation of these teeth is needed. Adhesive bridges have a false tooth with “wings” that have specially treated surfaces and are then bonded onto the supporting tooth or teeth.

The dentists at the Blockley Partnership have wide experience in making all types of bridges and can advise you on the suitability of each particular type.

Bridges can have a metal substructure with porcelain over it to simulate the missing tooth, or they may be made entirely of porcelain. The suitability depends upon the site and the bite. Bridges can be large where remaining teeth are used to support a number of missing teeth. They can also be used to splint loose teeth. We are now able to incorporate stress breaking joints into the bridge span.

## How is a bridge made?

The process of making a bridge involves firstly ensuring that the foundations are sound. This may involve addressing any periodontal (gum) disease, root canal fillings, placing posts and/or good fillings to act as cores on the supporting teeth.

The supporting teeth are then prepared and impressions are taken. At this stage a temporary bridge is made out of plastic and fitted until the permanent bridge has been made by the dental technician (usually about two weeks).

The technician makes an exact cast of the teeth prepared from the impression and works upon that to make a precisely fitting custom-made bridge usually out of gold or porcelain.

The bridge is then tried into the mouth to check the fit, colour and bite. If all is satisfactory it is cemented permanently onto the prepared teeth.

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