



Love Your Smile

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Fractures in Teeth

Introduction

There are fracture lines in all teeth.

However in some the fracture can be significant and can ultimately lead to the loss of the tooth

In some cases the fractures may be associated with sensitivity and even with death of the pulp.

In some cases the fractures may result in pulpal death or complete fracture of the tooth without any previous pain or other symptoms.

What can the dentist do?

In most cases we simply keep an eye, perhaps doing pulp tests and maybe x-rays, but usually simply observation and making sure they are no visual changes.

Do I need treatment?

At the very least you need to realise the problem and take preventative measures to stop it getting worse.

It will also depend on other associated problems.

So for example if there is evidence of tooth grinding we may suggest a night guard.

In cases where there is associated damage (perhaps a filling) then we might suggest a crown.

What happens if we simply ignore the fracture?

Usually nothing.

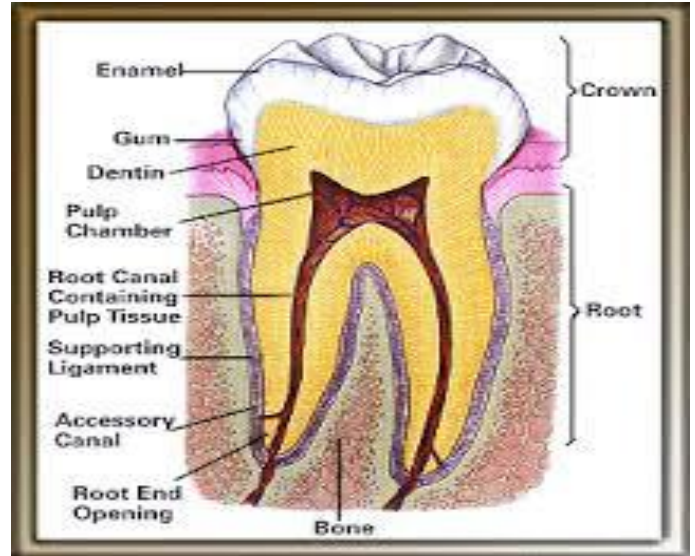
This is why regular dental checkups is essential as the problem can be monitored and if there are any changes then patients can find out the options

However the Fracture can progress and involve the pulp and lead to pain and even loss of the tooth.

As we life spans increase we are seeing far more patients with fractures and where the tooth has finally become symptomatic, and/or where an extraction has become necessary. This is why sometime pre-emptive treatment is advisable.

What sort of tests might we do?

- Observation
- History Taking
- Pulp Test
- X-rays



Sealing The Fracture

In some cases a simple sealant can be applied and this can be very effective.

We may also suggest special toothpastes which seal the fracture.

Night Guards

In cases where there is a grinding action or related jaw pain we advise a night guard.

We have a separate leaflet about night guards. Please ask for one if you want more information

Night Guards are an easy way of preventing/stopping the pain associated with teeth wearing away.

Bonded Adhesive Fillings

These are easy and simple and will often completely solve the problem, but they do need long term maintenance and replacement.

They work by sealing the fracture, bonding the sides together and protecting the pulp.

Root Canal Treatment

In some cases, and very rarely, this may be required in order to keep the tooth.

This is why it is so essential to stop the problem getting to this stage.

In cases where Root canal is necessary then almost always a crown will be placed to protect the occlusal surface.

Crowns

The role of a crown is to replaced lost tooth structure as well as protecting the rest of the tooth from the normal forces of the occlusion.

This is especially important when the tooth has been root treated or where there are excessive occlusal forces.

The crown may actually only involve the top of the tooth and modern materials mean less tooth destruction but the same protective value.

Extraction and Replacement

In a few cases the tooth is lost. It is important for patients to plan for this as implants and bridgework can be expensive, even if it is essential.

Last but not least

Good Oral Hygiene and sugar control is essential in all cases for long term maintenance.

