

### What are Bridges?

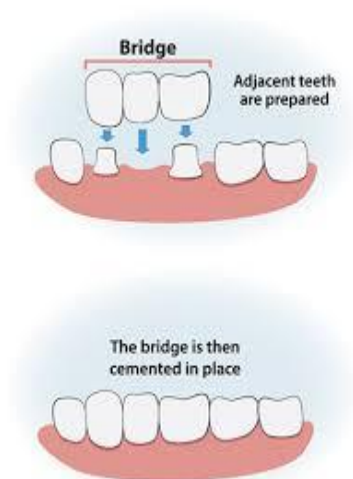
Bridges are fixed prosthetic devices which are constructed to replace missing teeth. Unlike removable devices such as dentures, which you can take out and clean daily, Bridges are cemented onto existing teeth or implants.

### How do Bridges Work?

A bridge may be recommended if you're missing one or more teeth. Gaps left by missing teeth eventually cause the remaining teeth to rotate or shift into the empty spaces, resulting in a bad bite. The imbalance caused by missing teeth can also lead to gum disease and temporomandibular joint (TMJ) disorders.

Bridges are commonly used to replace one or more missing teeth. They span the space where the teeth are missing. Bridges are cemented to the natural teeth or implants surrounding the empty space. These teeth, called abutments, serve as anchors for the bridge. A replacement tooth, called a pontic, is attached to the crowns that cover the abutments. As with crowns, you have a choice of materials for bridges. Your dentist can help you decide which to use, based on the location of the missing tooth (or teeth), its function, aesthetic considerations and cost. Porcelain or ceramic bridges can be matched to the colour of your natural teeth.

The risks involved with bridges are that the adjacent teeth have to be prepared resulting in filing down healthy teeth and crowning them, if this is a concern dental implants may be an option.





## COMBERTON DENTAL SURGERY & IMPLANT CENTRE

### **Why would I need a bridge?**

When a tooth is lost through disease or accidental trauma closing the space maybe important for cosmetic reasons, but your dentist has good clinical reasons to fill in the space, too: leaving the gap open can put extra strain on the teeth either side. It can also affect your "bite" , the teeth on either side of the gap may lean together into the space and alter the way that the upper and lower teeth meet; which can cause further problems.

### **A Maryland bridge**

Your dentist doesn't need to use crowns to support a Maryland bridge. One or two wings are used to support the pontic instead. The dentist simply bonds the wing to the back of one of the teeth next to the gap. Maryland bridges are good because only a little material must be removed from one of the teeth next to the gap. However, they are not as strong as conventional bridges and are only suitable for smaller gaps toward the front of the mouth. Also, if the teeth either side of the gap are in a poor condition, the dentist may advise that a Maryland bridge is not appropriate. The retainers and the pontics of bridges can be made from a number of different materials, just as individual crowns can. Your dentist will recommend the best type of material for your bridge.

### **How long does a Maryland bridge last?**

A dental bridge should last for many years. We are so confident of the quality of our bridges that we guarantee them for 2 years.

### **How does the dentist make a Maryland bridge?**

For a Maryland bridge, your dentist will remove a little of the back surface of one or both of the teeth beside the gap. Once the teeth have been prepared, your dentist will take an "impression" (i.e. make a mould of) your teeth and take a measurement of how you bite together. Your dentist will also record the shade of the adjacent teeth so that the bridge is an exact match or we can arrange an appointment with our technician for a more accurate shade match. About two weeks after your first appointment your dentist will see you for a second time to check the fit and that the shade of the Maryland Bridge is a good match for your other teeth. Then the Maryland Bridge is cemented with a bonding agent. You will have to clean around your bridge after it is fitted with special dental floss. Your dentist or hygienist will explain how to do this.

### **Will the dentist use anaesthetic?**

In most cases it isn't necessary to have an anaesthetic for a Maryland bridge. It is usually necessary for a conventional bridge, unless the tooth or teeth being used for the retainers have already had root canal treatment. Your dentist will let you know before work begins whether you need anaesthetic and, if you do, will anaesthetise the teeth before working on them so that you don't feel anything.