

Do You Need a Crown?

You don't have to be royalty to get a crown. Millions of patients get crowns from their dentists each year! Dental crowns differ from the ones you may have admired on queens and kings, however. In dentistry, a crown goes around the outside of the tooth, wrapping it with a reinforcing layer, to restore its strength and appearance.



Your dentist is part of the National Dental Practice-Based Research Network, a group of dental practices that treat patients and also do dental research. For more information go to www.nationaldentalpbrn.org.



Dentists generally agree that molars need a crown after a root canal, a process for removing dead tissue and bacteria from inside a decayed tooth. But for other problems, dentists may vary in how likely they are to recommend a crown, a new study of 1,777 dentists shows. Researchers asked the dentists in the study to look at photos of teeth and say how likely they were to recommend a crown for each tooth.

In general, dentists are likely to recommend a crown for:

- Molars following a root canal
- Fractured or cracked teeth
- Broken fillings
- Large cavities
- Large fillings.



If you need a crown

If your dentist recommends a crown, ask why you need one and what type works best for you. To make room for the crown, your dentist will remove the thin outer layer of your tooth. Your crown may be made from ceramic materials, metals, or a combination. Your dentist may also color the material to look similar to your natural teeth.



Be kind to your crown

While your permanent crown is being made, you'll get a temporary one. Avoid chewing gum or sticky foods with that one. Even with your permanent crown, don't crunch down on hard foods like ice and **do get regular dental exams!**



More information on dental crowns is available at the National Library of Medicine's MedlinePlus (medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007631.htm).

Reference:
McCracken MS, Louis DR, Litaker MS, Minyé HM, Mungia R, Gordan VV, Marshall DG, Gilbert GH, National Dental PBRN Collaborative Group. Treatment recommendations for single-unit crowns: findings from The National Dental Practice-Based Research Network. *Journal of the American Dental Association*. 2016;147(11):882-890.

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To ensure excellent dental care, the Network carries out its studies in real-world settings—like your dentist's office—with regular patients like yourself who volunteer to participate. The studies wouldn't be possible without the involvement of our wonderful patients.

Thanks to everyone who participated in this and all of our studies!