

Cracked-Tooth Syndrome

Often, teeth may crack when subjected to the stresses of chewing hard foods, ice, or hard objects, or sometimes simply from normal daily function. Teeth with or without restorations (fillings) may exhibit this problem, but teeth restored with typical silver alloy or tooth-colored restorations are most susceptible. Older persons experience cracked teeth more frequently than younger people as a result of an accumulation of stress and use (“wear and tear”).

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OFTEN INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

1. Pain on chewing
2. Pain on application of hot or cold
3. Pain when eating sweets
4. Spontaneous dull ache or throb (tooth ache like pain)
5. X-ray evidence of the problem is not present
6. Dental decay is not present
7. Verification of the crack by the dentist when the tooth is prepared for restoration

TREATMENT OF CRACKED TEETH:

1. Simple Crack: The majority of cracked teeth (about 7 out of 10) can be treated by placement of a simple crown (cap) on the tooth. When the tooth is prepared for the crown and a temporary restoration (cap) is placed, the pain usually leaves within a few days. If this is the case with your tooth, we will place and cement the final crown at your next appointment. The condition should then be solved.
2. Complex Crack: Occasionally, (about 3 in 10) the tooth cracks into the pulp (nerve) of the tooth. The dentist cannot always diagnose the full extent of a crack, so if pain persists after placement of the temporary crown, you may have a crack into the pulp of the affected tooth. Please call us. This tooth may require endodontics (root canal therapy) before the crown is placed. This procedure requires one or two additional appointments before the permanent crown is placed (cemented) and you may be referred to a specialist for the root canal procedure.
3. Tooth Cracked in Half: Occasionally, a tooth splits into two separate pieces, requiring removal (extraction) of the entire tooth. If this happens, placement of a bridge or dental implant can be used to replace the missing tooth.

Thank you for your cooperation and please call us with any further questions.