



Crowns or Veneers: How Do I Decide?



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Introduction



Many people lack self esteem and confidence due to an imperfect smile. Fortunately, there are more options than ever before for those who wish to improve their appearance with whiter, straighter, and better shaped teeth.

Crowns and veneers are two popular cosmetic options for restoring teeth affected by chips, breaks, fractures, or decay. While crowns and veneers are both great cosmetic dentistry options, they are unique procedures with different advantages and drawbacks. For some, crowns may be ideal, and for others veneers may be a much better choice, depending on individual considerations and needs.

The purpose of this guide is to acquaint readers with both crowns and veneers as cosmetic dentistry options. It is intended to provide those considering cosmetic dentistry with background information to prepare for a dental consultation. Questions answered include:

- What are Crowns?
- What is Involved with Getting a Crown?
- What are Veneers?
- What is Involved with Getting a Veneer?
- How Do Crowns and Veneers Compare?
- What Should I Discuss with My Dentist?

If you think you may be interested in improving your smile, we invite you to read this guide and then give us a call to schedule a consultation.

What Are Crowns?

Dental crowns provide a natural looking way to restore a permanent tooth that is damaged, missing, or excessively decayed. Crowns are one of the strongest and most effective dental options for restoring a tooth's shape, size, strength, and appearance. When crowns are properly placed and well cared for, they can offer a long-lasting and trouble-free dental solution.

Crowns can be all porcelain, porcelain fused to a metal alloy (PFM), or an all-metal alloy. They are approximately 2 mm in thickness and encase the entire tooth. To place a crown, more of the tooth needs to be filed or ground down to prepare for the crown placement.

If tooth decay is present, the decayed part of the tooth must be removed before making the crown. The tooth may require some rebuilding to support the crown. A damaged tooth may also need to be built up.

What is Involved With Getting a Crown?

The process of getting a crown usually involves at least two visits. The first visit focuses primarily on preparation, while the second visit is for the actual placement of the crown.

If one has not already been done, the first visit will include an X-ray to reveal any decay of the tooth and the extent of that decay. If the decay is found to be extensive, a root canal is sometimes necessary.

A tooth is prepared for a crown by filing its side, as well as the biting surface. The sides of the adjacent teeth are also filled. A local anesthetic is typically administered for this procedure. An impression is made of the tooth and surrounding area. At this point, a temporary crown will be placed to protect the tooth for the interim, while the dental crown is being made.

The second visit is scheduled when the new crown is ready. At this time, the temporary crown is removed and replaced by the permanent crown. Adjustments will be made to assure the crown fits comfortably and correctly, and that the bite is properly aligned. This final step completes the procedure.

It is possible for teeth with crowns to have some movement. If this happens, the crown can be adjusted.



What Are Veneers?

Years of discoloration caused by coffee, tea, tobacco, and food can be effectively reversed with thin laminates known as veneers. Applied in just a few visits, veneers can also be placed to correct worn, chipped, or cracked teeth, or to close gaps between teeth.

A veneer consists of a very thin layer of porcelain or other material that is approximately 1 millimeter (mm) in thickness. The veneer is bonded to the front surface of an existing tooth.

The application of a veneer is not as invasive as the placement of a crown because preparation for the procedure leaves more of the original tooth intact. The amount of tooth surface removal required varies based on the type of veneer being used.

What is Involved With Getting a Veneer?

The first step in getting a veneer will be obtaining an impression of the tooth. The veneer will be modeled from this impression. The tooth preparation process involves buffing the tooth to remove an extremely thin layer of enamel, which allows for bonding and accommodates the thickness of the veneer. Approximately half a millimeter of the enamel on the front of the tooth is ground down to roughen the surface. A local anesthetic may be administered to alleviate discomfort.

The custom veneer is bonded to the tooth using a specialized adhesive cement. A dental curing light is used to set the bond and complete the process. In most cases, little to no movement of the tooth occurs after the veneer is in place. A night guard may be necessary to protect the veneer if the patient has a history of teeth grinding or clenching.

How Do Crowns and Veneers Compare?

The choice between a veneer or a crown usually depends on the condition of the tooth and the problem being addressed. Both are effective for restoring discolored teeth, compromised teeth, crooked teeth, or damaged teeth. With the exception of all-metal crowns, all crowns and veneers are custom colored to match the surrounding teeth.

In the case of a tooth that has a large filling, requires a root canal, or is extremely worn or cracked, a crown will most likely be the recommended option. When the restoration is mainly to improve appearance, and if the tooth is primarily intact, a veneer is usually recommended. Veneers are also a good choice for simple tooth shape alterations.

There are Advantages to Both Options: Which One Is Better for You?

Crown Advantages

- **Protection** - Since the tooth is covered, it is more shielded from decay.
- **More Natural Looking** - Porcelain crowns have the look and feel of natural teeth.
- **More Permanent** - Crowns don't have to be removed for cleaning as dentures do.
- **Covered by Insurance** - Dental insurance may provide some coverage for a crown.

Veneer Advantages

- **Less Invasive** - Not as much trimming is needed, so more of the natural tooth remains.
- **No Gum Margin** - Veneers don't show a gum margin after years, the way crowns can.
- **Stability** - Teeth with veneers have minimal movement.
- **Stain Resistance** - Porcelain veneers resist discoloration.



What Should I Discuss With My Dentist?

As we discussed at the beginning of this guide, it is very important that you schedule a consultation with an experienced dental professional to help you determine if crowns or veneers are right for you. Part of that consultation should be providing you with the opportunity to ask your dentist everything you need to know about your prospective procedure.

Some possible questions to ask at your consultation include:

- How much does each procedure cost, and what insurance coverage can be expected?
- What experience does the dentist have with these procedures?
- Should I consider other options, such as [dentures](#) or [implants](#)?
- How long should I expect my veneer or crown to last?
- Will the initial cost cover additional visits if the crown isn't fitting properly?
- Will wearing a mouth guard be necessary?
- Will any special care be required for the veneer or crown?

These are just examples of the questions patients commonly ask. You will likely have additional questions, and we encourage you to write them down and bring them to your appointment.

Conclusion

Weninger Dentistry has extensive experience in placing crowns and veneers for many patients in the Tampa Bay area. Our team will help you determine the best options for your cosmetic and dental needs. We will guide you in selecting an affordable treatment plan that meets your goals for improved oral health, comfort, and appearance.

[Contact us](#) today to set up an appointment.



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