

Bridging a Gap

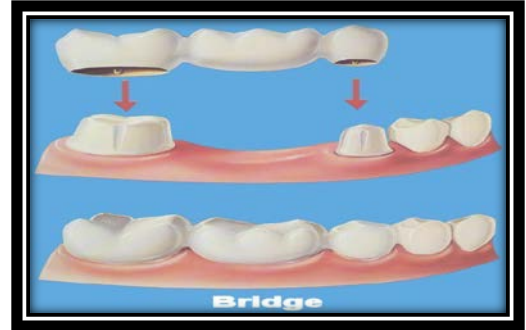
An empty space, or gap, in your smile may affect your chewing and speaking abilities and your self-confidence. If you're missing one or more teeth, your dentist may recommend a fixed bridge as a treatment option.

What is a bridge?

A fixed bridge is a dental appliance that replaces one or more missing teeth thus "bridging" the space between the two adjacent natural teeth or implants. Bridges are made from gold, alloys, porcelain, or a combination of these materials.

A traditional fixed bridge consists of a false tooth or teeth fused between two crowns, or caps, that are cemented on the surrounding, or abutment, teeth. An implant bridge is fastened to two or more implants that are submerged in the bone tissue.

Bridges are sometimes called "fixed partial dentures". However, unlike removable partial dentures, bridges cannot be removed by the patient.



Why should I get a bridge?

If you are missing any teeth, the resulting space could cause speech or chewing problems. Missing teeth also can cause your remaining teeth to move out of position. This repositioning can make you more susceptible to tooth decay and gum disease, which can cause further tooth loss. A fixed bridge can replace those missing teeth, correcting your bite, and improving your chewing and speech abilities. A bridge also can help to maintain the natural shape of your face.



How do I care for a bridge?

The success of a bridge depends on its foundation- the abutment teeth or implants- so it's vital for patients with bridges to maintain their oral health. If you have a bridge, it's more important than ever to brush for two minutes, twice a day and to see your dentist every six months. Dr. Bui also might recommend that you use floss threaders to reach the spaces between the bridge and the adjacent teeth and gums.

To learn more about bridges and to determine if a bridge is right for you call our office (817) 466-9972.

