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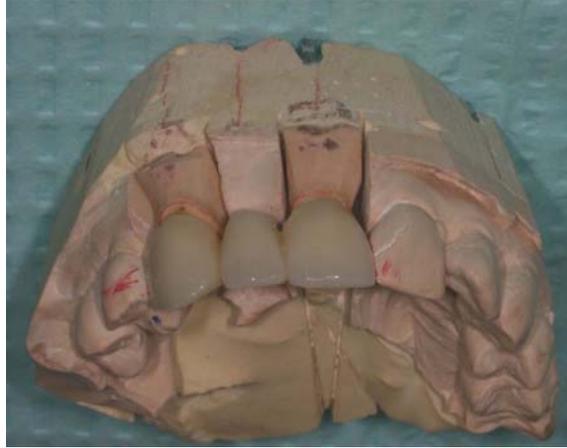
Port Townsend, WA 98368

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This document shows two different bridges. The first sequence is a bridge which replaces an upper front tooth lost due to a fractured root. The first three pictures below show the temporary bridge in place, and removed. The fourth picture shows the permanent bridge ready to have the fit checked.



Note the permanent bridge has a metal substructure, whereas the temporary bridge is all plastic. You can also see that the temporary bridge doesn't fit perfectly at the gumline. The next two pictures show the bridge as it fits on the models the lab used during fabrication. There are a lot of steps to making the bridge--the stone models (the dies) are used to make thin wax slipcovers which are cast in a gold/platinum alloy. This coping is cut even thinner, then several layers of porcelain are baked--opaque to block the metal, body porcelain for bulk strength, and translucent porcelain near the edges of the teeth. The bridge is shown incompletely seated on the model so you can get an idea of how it fits down.

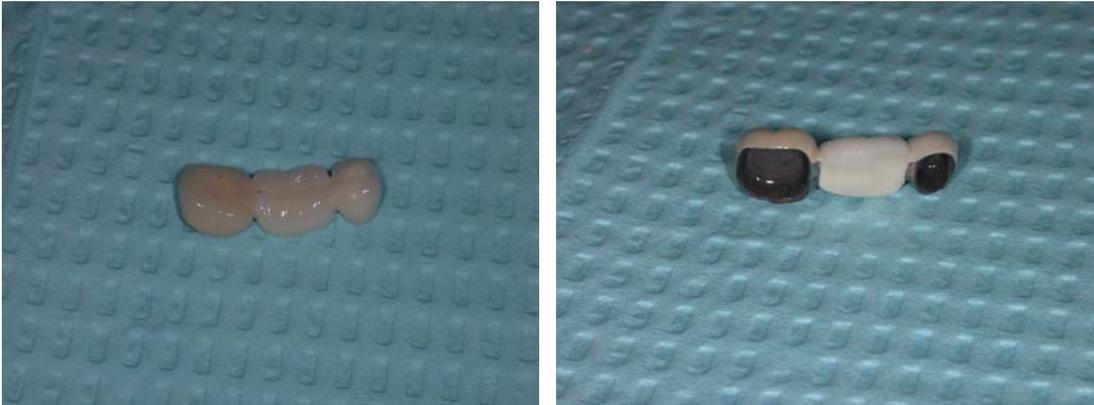


The bridge is tried in the mouth, and the contacts between the bridge and the teeth are adjusted to be snug, but not so tight you can't floss them. The bite is adjusted as with a single crown, and the fit is checked at the gumline. The photo on the right below shows the bridge incompletely seated, perhaps due to a contact on the back of the bridge that was too tight. (More likely, though, gravity sneaked in there while I was getting the camera ready for the picture.) There are cotton rolls in there keeping things dry in preparation for the cementation, not shown.



Two comments on the photos: although floss can be used between the natural teeth and the bridge, it can't be used between the teeth of the bridge itself. A device has to be used to thread floss under the bridge to clean the underside of the bridge and the "inside" of the teeth holding the bridge in place (the abutments). It takes awhile to get proficient at this, but it's very important if you want the bridge to last for more than a few years. Second, the adjacent teeth on the right (the patient's left) have discolored fillings. Ideally these would be replaced at the same time as the bridge is fabricated. I wasn't able to talk the patient into doing that in this case, he was more interested in function than esthetics.

Here's another abbreviated sequence for a back tooth. (Some of these photos were taken with a mirror, so they may be confusing to visualize.) The basic idea is the same. The first two photos show the bridge back from the lab ready to be seated. In this case, the individual crowns of the bridge fit, but the teeth had moved a little during the time the patient wore the temporary bridge. We had to cut this bridge, put it on the teeth, and temporarily glue it together in that position, after which the lab welded it back together. These pictures were taken before that extra step was done, but they show the metal framework and porcelain so you can get an idea of the construction.



The next photo shows the prepared teeth (the abutments) cleaned off and ready for the bridge try-in. Once again, the contacts and bite are adjusted, then the bridge is cemented just like a single crown. The final picture shows a side view of the bridge with the teeth closed after the bite has been adjusted.

