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Pre-operative pictures of the tooth. Note cracks, and gray stains indicating corrosion of the amalgam (silver/mercury) filling. There was no obvious decay on this tooth, and the X-ray looked OK, but it clearly is wearing out.



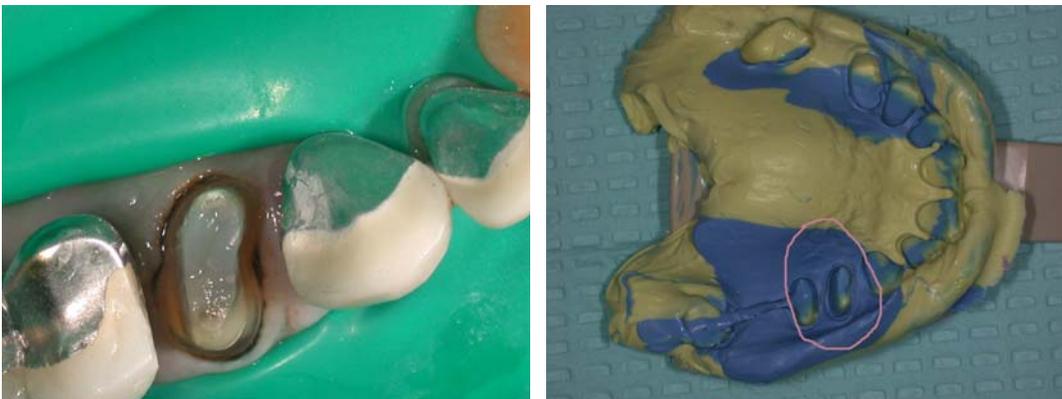
The last photo above shows the tooth after the rubber dam has been applied. Next, the silver filling is removed. Note the dark areas of decay; this shows one of the limitations of X-rays, decay has to be pretty advanced before it shows up. The second photo below shows the tooth after the decay has been removed.



Next, a band is placed around the tooth and wedged into position (so that the buildup material won't ooze all over the place). The tooth is prepared with bonding agents, and a composite buildup is placed. The second photo (below right) shows the completed buildup ready for the preparation for the crown.



The two photos below show the tooth after the crown preparation is complete, and the impression with a circle drawn around the prepared tooth area. A thin "retraction cord" is visible in the left picture; this helps us get an impression below the gums.



An impression of the lower teeth is taken (not shown) then a “bite registration” is taken to relate the upper impression to the lower teeth. The crown must match the bite, thus even though we’re working on an upper teeth we need models of both arches. This is sometimes confusing if you come in for a crown on a broken upper tooth and the first thing the assistant does is take impressions of the lower teeth!



Finally, a temporary crown is made, usually of plastic; it fits over the tooth as shown in the last two pictures. I forgot to take a photo of the crown cemented on with temporary cement, but that’s one of the final steps. Before you leave, the assistant will check the color of your teeth so the lab can match the crown to your smile.

