

Dental ABC

Temporary restoration

Also known as an intermediate restoration or dressing, this type of tooth filling is used to restore the form, function or appearance of the teeth for a limited period of time, from several days to several months. Temporary restorations are designed to seal a tooth and maintain its position until a permanent restoration will replace it.

There are many different sorts of materials used, for example, zinc polycarboxylate or zinc oxide and eugenol. Some of the temporary restorations may be indicated as palliative treatment, for example during root canal treatment to soothe a painful tooth or in cases of high levels of tooth decay to stabilize the teeth and alter the oral flora. (bacteria predominant in the mouth.)

Toothbrushing

The Bass method is a preferred method of brushing. It involves placing the tooth brush head at a 45 degree angle along the gum-line, pointing downwards on the bottom teeth and upwards on the top teeth. The tips of the toothbrush bristles should go underneath the gum-line. The toothbrush is gently vibrated, not scrubbed, along the gum-line spending about 3 seconds on each tooth. The entire process of brushing should last 3-4 minutes (about the length of one song on the radio!)

Toothpaste

Toothpaste, is the paste or gel that is used with a toothbrush to clean teeth. It contains a mild abrasive, detergent, flavoring agent, humectant (retains

water) and various medicaments designed to prevent tooth decay. Only a pea sized amount of paste is recommended to be placed on the toothbrush. The actual mechanical action of brushing is more important than the tooth paste used. However a toothpaste containing fluoride helps to significantly reduce tooth decay.

Ultrasonic cleaner

An ultrasonic cleaner is an instrument which transmits high frequency vibrations to remove large deposits of plaque, calculus and debris from tooth surfaces. Water is used with the ultrasonic cleaner to cool the tooth and flush away debris. Hand instrument cleaning is often necessary following ultrasonic cleaning to thoroughly clean off tooth surfaces.

Our practice uses the Dentsply Prophyjet which can also clean the teeth using a mixture of bicarbonate powder and water. This deals very effectively with stains stuck between teeth and on the surfaces of the teeth. One patient described it as “like being sandblasted – now I know how an old building feels!” It is a little messy but very good for inaccessible staining.

Help Please!!!!

If you have a dental emergency which need to be dealt with on that day call us before 10.00 am. This way we can accommodate everyone who needs to be seen as soon as possible. Calling in the afternoon will probably mean leaving the problem to be treated the next day. Also, we close one afternoon each week for essential cleaning and maintenance to the surgery.

Obviously emergencies due to trauma or a child in pain will be dealt with at any time.