

CRACKED TOOTH



Teeth may crack when subjected to the stress of chewing hard foods or ice, or by biting on an unexpected hard object. Teeth with or without restorations may exhibit this problem, but teeth restored with typical silver/mercury filling material are most susceptible.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A CRACKED TOOTH:

1. Pain on chewing with occasional sharp pain.
2. May have pain with cold.
3. May have unsolicited pain (usually leakage of sugar into tooth crack).
4. No radiographic evidence of a problem is present.
5. No dental decay is present.
6. The crack may not be visible until after tooth is prepared for a crown restoration.
7. The tooth may have a visible fracture line with no pain. The tooth is weak, and pain associated with a more complex problem can occur in the future.

TREATMENT OF CRACKED TEETH:

1. **SIMPLE CRACK:** The majority of cracked teeth (about 9 out of 10) can be treated by placement of a crown (cap) on the tooth. When the tooth is prepared for the crown, and a temporary restoration is placed, the pain usually disappears immediately. If this is the case with your tooth, we will place the final crown on the next appointment that follows the preparation and the problem should be solved. It is rare, but always possible, that a crack could progress after a crown is placed. This condition may require a root canal treatment. With a cracked tooth, the prognosis is always questionable and occasionally extraction is the only treatment.

2. **COMPLEX CRACK:** Occasionally (about 1 in 10) the small cracks extend into the nerve of the tooth. If pain persists after placement of the temporary crown you may have a crack into the pulp of the affected tooth. If you still have pain with the temporary crown, please call us prior to your appointment to seat the permanent crown. The tooth may require root canal treatment before the crown is permanently seated. It is always possible that root canal treatment in a cracked tooth can fail and require extraction.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call us.