Welcome to Foster Family Dental!

When you visit our dental office, your smile is our *top priority.* Our team is dedicated to providing you with the personalized, gentle care you deserve. Part of our commitment to serving our patients includes providing information that helps them to make more informed decisions about their oral health needs.

We want you to be confident knowing that we are a team of highly trained and skilled clinicians. We pride ourselves in providing the care you need to keep your smile healthy. To give you the best possible service and results, we are committed to continual education and learning. We attend dental lectures, meetings, and dental conventions to stay informed of new techniques, the latest products, and the newest equipment that a modern dental office can utilize to provide state-of-the-art dental care. Also, being members of various professional dental associations helps us to stay abreast of the changes and recommendations for our profession.

**Building a foundation of trust** by treating our patients as special individuals is vital to our success. We understand how uneasy some patients can feel about their dental visits, and we know that we can make a difference by providing a relaxing and positive experience. Our entire team is dedicated to providing you with excellent, personalized care and service to make your visits as comfortable and pleasant as possible.

Contact Us Today and Schedule an Appointment!

**We genuinely hope our website is helpful** to you in learning more about our practice, dental conditions and treatments, dental recommendations, and more. Please browse through our website and be sure to give us a call if you have any questions or would like to schedule an appointment.



About Our Dental Practice

We are a dental practice devoted to *restoring* and *enhancing* the natural beauty of your smile using conservative, state-of-the-art procedures that will result in beautiful, long lasting smiles! We thank you for allowing us to take care of your dental needs and look forward to serving you.  Schedule an appointment today…..we’ll give you a reason to smile!

[Meet Our Doctor](http://foster64061.td.prosites.com/our-practice/OurDentist.aspx)

[Meet Our Team](http://foster64061.td.prosites.com/our-practice/MeetOurTeam.aspx)

Our High Standards

A standard of excellence in personalized dental care enables us to provide the quality dental services our patients deserve.  We provide comprehensive treatment planning and use restorative and cosmetic dentistry to achieve your optimal dental health.  Should a dental emergency occur, we make every effort to see and care for you the same day.

Education & Prevention

As a practice, we are true believers that *preventative care* and *education* are the keys to optimal dental health.  We strive to provide “*dental health care*” vs. “*disease care*”.  That’s why we focus on thorough exams – checking the overall health of your teeth and gums, performing oral cancer exams, and taking x-rays when necessary.  We also know that routine cleanings, flossing, sealants, and fluoride are all helpful in preventing dental disease.  Not only are we focused on the beauty of your smile, we’re also concerned about your health.  A review of your medical history can help us stay informed of your overall health, any new medications, and any illnesses that may impact your dental health.

Services

Regardless of the extent of your dental needs, we promise to provide you with exceptional care as we enhance the natural beauty of your smile.  Below are just some of the many procedures and services we regularly provide to our patients – with a gentle touch, and stunning results.  Your smile is our first priority, and we’ll give you something to smile about.

If you have any questions, concerns, or would like to schedule an appointment, please contact us today.  We look forward to providing you with the personal care you deserve.

[**Cleanings & Prevention**](http://foster64061.td.prosites.com/our-services/cleanings-prevention/)

[Dental Exams & Cleanings](http://foster64061.td.prosites.com/our-services/cleanings-prevention/dental-exams-cleanings/)

[Dental X-Rays](http://foster64061.td.prosites.com/our-services/cleanings-prevention/dental-x-rays/)

[**Cosmetic Dentistry**](http://foster64061.td.prosites.com/our-services/cosmetic-dentistry/)

[Composite Fillings](http://foster64061.td.prosites.com/our-services/cosmetic-dentistry/composite-fillings/)

[Porcelain Crowns (Caps)](http://foster64061.td.prosites.com/our-services/cosmetic-dentistry/porcelain-crowns-caps/)

[Porcelain Fixed Bridges](http://foster64061.td.prosites.com/our-services/cosmetic-dentistry/porcelain-fixed-bridges/)

[Porcelain Veneers](http://foster64061.td.prosites.com/our-services/cosmetic-dentistry/porcelain-veneers/)

[Teeth Whitening](http://foster64061.td.prosites.com/our-services/cosmetic-dentistry/teeth-whitening/)

[**Periodontal Disease**](http://foster64061.td.prosites.com/our-services/periodontal-disease/)

[What is Periodontal (Gum) Disease?](http://foster64061.td.prosites.com/our-services/periodontal-disease/what-is-periodontal-gum-disease/)

[Diagnosis](http://foster64061.td.prosites.com/our-services/periodontal-disease/diagnosis/)

[Treatment](http://foster64061.td.prosites.com/our-services/periodontal-disease/treatment/)

[Maintenance](http://foster64061.td.prosites.com/our-services/periodontal-disease/maintenance/)

[**Restorations**](http://foster64061.td.prosites.com/our-services/restorations/)

[Composite Fillings](http://foster64061.td.prosites.com/our-services/restorations/composite-fillings/)

[Crowns (Caps)](http://foster64061.td.prosites.com/our-services/restorations/crowns-caps/)

[Dentures & Partial Dentures](http://foster64061.td.prosites.com/our-services/restorations/dentures-partial-dentures/)

[Fixed Bridges](http://foster64061.td.prosites.com/our-services/restorations/fixed-bridges/)

[Root Canal Therapy](http://foster64061.td.prosites.com/our-services/restorations/root-canal-therapy/)

Cleanings & Prevention

[Dental Exams & Cleanings](http://foster64061.td.prosites.com/our-services/cleanings-prevention/dental-exams-cleanings/)  |  [Dental X-Rays](http://foster64061.td.prosites.com/our-services/cleanings-prevention/dental-x-rays/)  |  [How to Properly Brush & Floss](http://foster64061.td.prosites.com/our-services/cleanings-prevention/how-to-properly-brush-floss/)

A preventive program is a cooperative effort by the patient, dentist, and dental staff to preserve the natural dentition and supporting structures by preventing the onset, progress, and recurrence of dental diseases and conditions.

Preventing dental disease starts at home with good oral hygiene and a balanced diet.  It is continued in the dental office by the efforts of your dentist and dental hygienist to promote, restore, and maintain your oral health.

Prevention also includes regular dental exams, cleanings, and x-rays. Sealants and fluoride are also great preventive treatments that help protect the teeth.

Prevention helps avoid serious and costly dental problems and is the key to having a ***healthy, confident, beautiful smile.***

Dental Exams & Cleanings

**Dental Exam**

A comprehensive dental exam will be performed by Dr. Foster at your initial dental visit.  Regular check-up exams include the following:

**Examination of diagnostic x-rays (radiographs):** Essential for detection of decay, tumors, cysts, and bone loss.  X-rays also help determine tooth and root positions.

**Oral cancer screening:** Check the face, neck, lips, tongue, throat, tissues, and gums for any signs of oral cancer.

**Gum disease evaluation:** Check the gums and bone around the teeth for any signs of periodontal disease.

**Examination of tooth decay:** All tooth surfaces will be checked for decay with special dental instruments.

**Examination of existing restorations:** Check current fillings, crowns, etc.

**Professional Dental Cleaning**

Professional dental cleanings (*dental prophylaxis*) are performed by dentists and hygienists.  Your cleaning appointment will include a dental exam and the following:

**Removal of calculus (tartar):** Calculus is hardened plaque that has been left on the tooth for some time and is now firmly attached to the tooth surface.  Calculus forms above and below the gum line and can only be removed with special dental instruments.

**Removal of plaque:** Plaque is a sticky, almost invisible film that forms on the teeth.  It is a growing colony of living bacteria, food debris, and saliva.  The bacteria produce toxins (poisons) that inflame the gums.  This inflammation is the start of periodontal disease!

**Teeth polishing:** Remove stain and plaque that is not otherwise removed during tooth brushing and scaling.

Dental X-Rays

Dental radiographs (x-rays) are essential, preventative, diagnostic tools that provide valuable information not visible during a regular dental exam.  Dentists and dental hygienists use this information to safely and accurately detect hidden dental abnormalities and complete an accurate treatment plan.  Without x-rays, problem areas may go undetected.

**Dental x-rays may reveal:**

Abscesses or cysts.

Bone loss.

Cancerous and non-cancerous tumors.

Decay between the teeth.

Developmental abnormalities.

Poor tooth and root positions.

Problems inside a tooth or below the gum line.

Detecting and treating dental problems at an early stage can save you time, money, unnecessary discomfort, and your teeth!

**Are dental x-rays safe?**

We are all exposed to natural radiation in our environment.  The amount of radiation exposure from a full mouth series of x-rays is equal to the amount a person receives in a single day from natural sources.

Dental x-rays produce a low level of radiation and are considered safe.  Dentists take necessary precautions to limit the patient’s exposure to radiation when taking dental x-rays.  These precautions include using lead apron shields to protect the body and using modern, fast film that cuts down the exposure time of each x-ray.

**How often should dental x-rays be taken?**

The need for dental x-rays depends on each patient’s *individual* dental health needs.  Dr. Foster will recommend necessary x-rays based on the review of your medical and dental history, dental exam, signs and symptoms, age consideration, and risk for disease.

A *full mouth series* of dental x-rays is recommended for new patients.  A full series is usually good for three to five years.  *Bite-wing x-rays* (x-rays of top and bottom teeth biting together) are taken at recall (check-up) visits and are recommended once a year to detect new dental problems.

Cosmetic Dentistry

[Composite Fillings](http://foster64061.td.prosites.com/our-services/cosmetic-dentistry/composite-fillings/)  |  [Porcelain Crowns (Caps)](http://foster64061.td.prosites.com/our-services/cosmetic-dentistry/porcelain-crowns-caps/)  |  [Porcelain Fixed Bridges](http://foster64061.td.prosites.com/our-services/cosmetic-dentistry/porcelain-fixed-bridges/)  |  [Porcelain Veneers](http://foster64061.td.prosites.com/our-services/cosmetic-dentistry/porcelain-veneers/)  |  [Teeth Whitening](http://foster64061.td.prosites.com/our-services/cosmetic-dentistry/teeth-whitening/)

In the past decade there has been a *dramatic* interest in cosmetic dentistry.  We all realize that having a healthy, bright, beautiful smile enhances our appearance and allows us to smile with confidence.  Thanks to the advances in modern cosmetic dentistry, we are able to improve our teeth and smiles with quick, painless and surprisingly affordable treatments.

**Cosmetic dental treatments can:**

Change the size, shape, and alignment of certain teeth.

Fill in unattractive spaces between teeth.

Improve or correct bites.

Lighten or brighten the color of teeth.

Repair decayed, broken, cracked, or chipped teeth.

Replace missing teeth.

Replace old, unattractive dental treatments.

***Remember, your smile speaks before you even say a word!***

Composite Fillings

A composite (tooth colored) filling is used to repair a tooth that is affected by decay, cracks, fractures, etc.  The decayed or affected portion of the tooth will be removed and then filled with a composite filling.

There are many types of filling materials available, each with their own advantages and disadvantages.  You and Dr. Foster can discuss the best options for restoring your teeth.  Composite fillings, along with silver amalgam fillings, are the most widely used today.  Because composite fillings are tooth colored, they can be closely matched to the color of existing teeth, and are more aesthetically suited for use in front teeth or the more visible areas of the teeth.

As with most dental restorations, composite fillings are not permanent and may someday have to be replaced.  They are very durable, and will last many years, giving you a long lasting, beautiful smile.

**Reasons for composite fillings:**

Chipped teeth.

Closing space between two teeth.

Cracked or broken teeth.

Decayed teeth.

Worn teeth.

**How are composite fillings placed?**

Composite fillings are usually placed in one appointment.  While the tooth is numb, your dentist will remove decay as necessary.  The space will then be thoroughly cleaned and carefully prepared before the new filling is placed.  If the decay was near the nerve of the tooth, a special medication will be applied for added protection.  The composite filling will then be precisely placed, shaped, and polished, restoring your tooth to its original shape and function.

It is normal to experience sensitivity to hot and cold when composite fillings are first placed, however this will subside shortly after your tooth acclimates to the new filling.

You will be given care instructions at the conclusion of your treatment.  Good oral hygiene practices, eating habits, and regular dental visits will aid in the life of your new fillings.

Porcelain Crowns (Caps)

A crown (or cap) is a covering that encases the entire tooth surface restoring it to its original shape and size.  A crown protects and strengthens tooth structure that cannot be restored with fillings or other types of restorations.

Although there are several types of crowns, porcelain (tooth colored crown) is the most popular, because porcelain crowns resemble your natural teeth.  They are highly durable and will last many years, but like most dental restorations, they may eventually need to be replaced.  Porcelain crowns are made to match the shape, size, and color or your teeth giving you a natural, long-lasting beautiful smile.

**Reasons for crowns:**

Broken or fractured teeth.

Cosmetic enhancement.

Decayed teeth.

Fractured fillings.

Large fillings.

Tooth has a root canal.

**What does getting a crown involve?**

A crown procedure usually requires two appointments.  Your first appointment will include taking several highly accurate molds (or impressions) that will be used to create your custom crown.  A mold will also be used to create a temporary crown, which will stay on your tooth for approximately two weeks until your new crown is fabricated by a dental laboratory.

While the tooth is numb, Dr. Foster will prepare the tooth by removing any decay and shaping the surface to properly fit the crown.  Once these details are accomplished, your temporary crown will be placed with temporary cement and your bite will be checked to ensure you are biting properly.

At your second appointment your temporary crown will be removed, the tooth will be cleaned, and your new crown will be carefully placed to ensure both the spacing and bite are accurate.

You will be given care instructions and encouraged to have regular dental visits to check your new crown.

Porcelain Fixed Bridges

A dental bridge is a fixed (non-removable) appliance and is an excellent way to replace missing teeth.

There are several types of bridges.  You and Dr. Foster will discuss the best options for your particular case.  The “traditional bridge” is the most popular type and is usually made of porcelain.  Porcelain fixed bridges are popular because they resemble your natural teeth.  This type of bridge consists to two crowns that go over two anchoring teeth (abutment teeth) and are attached to pontics (artificial teeth), filling the gap created by one or more missing teeth.

Dental bridges are highly durable and will last many years, however they may need replacement or need to be re-cemented due to normal wear.

**Reasons for a fixed bridge:**

Fill space of missing teeth.

Maintain facial shape.

Prevent remaining teeth from drifting out of position.

Restore chewing and speaking ability.

Restore your smile.

Upgrade from a removable partial denture to a permanent dental appliance.

**What does getting a fixed bridge involve?**

Getting a bridge usually requires two or more visits.  While the teeth are numb, the two anchoring teeth are prepared by removing a portion of enamel to allow for a crown.  Next, a highly accurate impression (mold) is made which will be sent to a dental laboratory where the bridge will be fabricated.  In addition, a temporary bridge will be made and worn for several weeks until your next appointment.

At the second visit, you permanent bridge will be carefully checked, adjusted, and cemented to achieve a proper fit.  Occasionally, your bridge may be cemented with temporary cement, allowing your teeth and tissue time to get used to the new bridge.  The new bridge will be permanently cemented at a later time.

You will receive care instructions at the conclusion of your treatment.  Proper brushing, flossing and regular dental visits will aid in the life of your new permanent bridge.

Porcelain Veneers

Veneers are very thin pieces of durable, tooth shaped porcelain that are custom made (for shape and color) by a professional dental laboratory.  They are bonded onto the front of teeth to create a beautiful and attractive smile.

Veneers can completely reshape your teeth and smile.  They can often be alternatives to crowns and the ideal solution in treating many dental conditions.

As with most dental restorations, veneers are not permanent and may someday need replacement.  They are very durable and will last many years, giving you a beautiful long lasting smile.

**Reasons for porcelain veneers:**

Cosmetically, to create a uniform, white, beautiful smile.

Crooked teeth.

Misshapen teeth.

Severely discolored or stained teeth.

Teeth that are too small or large.

Unwanted or uneven spaces.

Worn or chipped teeth.

**What does getting porcelain veneers involve?**

Getting veneers usually requires two visits to complete the process, with little or no anesthesia required during the procedure.  The teeth are prepared by lightly buffing and shaping the surface to allow for the thickness of the veneer.  A mold or impression of the teeth is taken and a shade (color) will then be chosen by you and Dr. Foster.

On the second visit the teeth will be cleansed with special liquids to achieve a durable bond.  Bonding cement is then placed between the tooth and veneer and a special light beam is used to harden and set the bond.

You will receive care instructions for veneers.  Proper brushing, flossing and regular dental visits will aid in the life of your new veneers.

Teeth Whitening

Teeth whitening (or bleaching) is a simple, non-invasive dental treatment used to change the color of natural tooth enamel and is an ideal way to enhance the beauty of your smile.

Because having whiter teeth has now become the number one aesthetic concern of most patients, there are a number of ways to whiten teeth.  The most popular method is using a home teeth whitening system that will whiten teeth dramatically.  We also provide and in-office whitening system that has had incredibile results.

Since teeth whitening only works on natural tooth enamel, it is important to evaluate replacement of any old fillings, crowns, etc.  Replacement of any restorations will be done after bleaching so they will match the newly bleached teeth.

Teeth whitening is not permanent.  A touch-up may be needed every several years, and more often if you smoke, drink coffee, tea, or wine.

**Reasons for teeth whitening:**

Fluorosis (excessive fluoridation during tooth development).

Normal wear of outer tooth layer.

Stained teeth due to medications (tetracycline, etc.).

Yellow, brown stained teeth.

**What does teeth whitening involve?**

Traditonal teeth whitening usually requires two visits.  At the first appointment, impressions (molds) will be made of your teeth to fabricate custom, clear plastic, trays.

At your second appointment, you will try on the trays for proper fit, and adjustments will be made if necessary.  The trays are worn with special whitening solution either twice a day for 30 minutes or overnight for a couple of weeks depending on the degree of staining and desired level of whitening.

Our in-office whitening system is performed in one visit. It consists of placing a whitening gel on your teeth that is activated under a special light to remove stains and discoloration from deeper tooth surfaces. We take special caution to protect your gums and other tissues during the procedure and provide a touch-up solution to use at home.

It is normal to experience tooth sensitivity during the time you are whitening your teeth, but it will subside shortly after you have stopped. We offer restorative products that can be used before whitening to prevent sensitivity or after whitening to relieve.

You will receive care instructions for your teeth and trays, and be encouraged to visit your dentist regularly to help maintain a beautiful, healthy, white smile.

Periodontal Disease

The word *periodontal* means “around the tooth”.  Periodontal disease attacks the gums and the bone that support the teeth.  Plaque is a sticky film of food debris, bacteria, and saliva.  If plaque is not removed, it turns into calculus (tartar).  When plaque and calculus are not removed, they begin to destroy the gums and bone.  Periodontal disease is characterized by red, swollen, and bleeding gums.

Four out of five people have periodontal disease and don’t know it!  Most people are not aware of it because the disease is usually painless in the early stages.

Not only is it the ***number one reason*** for tooth loss, research suggests that there may be a link between periodontal disease and other diseases such as, stroke, bacterial pneumonia, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and increased risk during pregnancy.  Researchers are determining if inflammation and bacteria associated with periodontal disease affects these systemic diseases and conditions.  Smoking also increases the risk of periodontal disease.

Good oral hygiene, a balanced diet, and regular dental visits can help reduce your risk of developing periodontal disease.

**Signs and symptoms of periodontal disease:**

**Bleeding gums** – Gums should never bleed, even when you brush vigorously or use dental floss.

**Loose teeth** – Also caused by bone loss or weakened periodontal fibers (fibers that support the tooth to the bone).

**New spacing between teeth** – Caused by bone loss.

**Persistent bad breath** – Caused by bacteria in the mouth.

**Pus around the teeth and gums** – Sign that there is an infection present.

**Receding gums** – Loss of gum around a tooth.

**Red and puffy gums** – Gums should never be red or swollen.

**Tenderness or Discomfort** – Plaque, calculus, and bacteria irritate the gums and teeth.

Treatment

Periodontal treatment methods depend upon the type and severity of the disease.  Dr. Foster will evaluate for periodontal disease and recommend the appropriate treatment.

Periodontal disease progresses as the sulcus (pocket or space) between the tooth and gums gets filled with bacteria, plaque, and tartar, causing irritation to the surrounding tissues.  When these irritants remain in the pocket space, they can cause damage to the gums and eventually, the bone that supports the teeth!

If the disease is caught in the early stages of *gingivitis*, and no damage has been done, one to two regular cleanings will be recommended.  You will also be given instructions on improving your daily oral hygiene habits and having regular dental cleanings.

If the disease has progressed to more advanced stages, a special periodontal cleaning called ***scaling and root planing*** *(deep cleaning)* will be recommended.  It is usually done one quadrant of the mouth at a time while the area is numb.  In this procedure, tartar, plaque, and toxins are removed from above and below the gum line (*scaling*) and rough spots on root surfaces are made smooth (*planing*).  This procedure helps gum tissue to heal and pockets to shrink.  Medications, special medicated mouth rinses, and an electric toothbrush may be recommended to help control infection and healing.

If the pockets do not heal after scaling and root planing, periodontal surgery may be needed to reduce pocket depths, making teeth easier to clean.  Dr. Foster may also recommend that you see a periodontist (specialist of the gums and supporting bone).

Maintenance

It only takes twenty-four hours for plaque that is not removed from your teeth to turn into calculus (tartar)!  Daily home cleaning helps control plaque and tartar formation, but those hard to reach areas will always need special attention.

Once your periodontal treatment has been completed, Dr. Foster will recommend that you have regular maintenance cleanings (*periodontal cleanings*), usually four times a year.  At these cleaning appointments, the pocket depths will be carefully checked to ensure that they are healthy.  Plaque and calculus that is difficult for you to remove on a daily basis will be removed from above and below the gum line.

In addition to your periodontal cleaning and evaluation, your appointment will usually include:

**Examination of diagnostic x-rays (radiographs):** Essential for detection of decay, tumors, cysts, and bone loss.X-rays also help determine tooth and root positions.

**Examination of existing restorations:** Check current fillings, crowns, etc.

**Examination of tooth decay:** Check all tooth surfaces for decay.

**Oral cancer screening:** Check the face, neck, lips, tongue, throat, cheek tissues, and gums for any signs of oral cancer.

**Oral hygiene recommendations:** Review and recommend oral hygiene aids as needed. (Electric toothbrushes, special periodontal brushes, fluorides, rinses, etc.)

**Teeth polishing:** Remove stain and plaque that is not otherwise removed during tooth brushing and scaling.

Good oral hygiene practices and periodontal cleanings are essential in maintaining dental health and keeping periodontal disease under control!

Restorations

[Composite Fillings](http://foster64061.td.prosites.com/our-services/restorations/composite-fillings/)  |  [Crowns (Caps)](http://foster64061.td.prosites.com/our-services/restorations/crowns-caps/)  |  [Dentures & Partial Dentures](http://foster64061.td.prosites.com/our-services/restorations/dentures-partial-dentures/)  |  [Fixed Bridges](http://foster64061.td.prosites.com/our-services/restorations/fixed-bridges/)  |  [Root Canal Therapy](http://foster64061.td.prosites.com/our-services/restorations/root-canal-therapy/)

It’s great news that the incidence of tooth decay has significantly diminished over the years due to the use of fluorides and an increase in patient awareness.  However, teeth are still susceptible to decay, infection, and breakage and sometimes need to be restored back to health.  Through improved techniques and modern technology, we are now able to offer more options for restoring a tooth back to its normal shape, appearance and function.

Should your teeth ever require a restorative treatment, you can rest assured knowing we will always discuss with you the available options, and recommend what we believe to be the most comfortable and least invasive treatment.  Providing you with excellent care is our number one priority when creating your beautiful smile.

**Reasons for restorative dentistry:**

Enhance your smile.

Fill in unattractive spaces between teeth.

Improve or correct an improper bite.

Prevent the loss of a tooth.

Relieve dental pain.

Repair damaged and decayed teeth.

Replace missing teeth.

Replace old, unattractive dental treatments.

Restore normal eating and chewing.

***Remember to give your teeth the attention they need today!***

Composite Fillings

A composite (tooth colored) filling is used to repair a tooth that is affected by decay, cracks, fractures, etc.  The decayed or affected portion of the tooth will be removed and then filled with a composite filling.

There are many types of filling materials available, each with their own advantages and disadvantages.  You and Dr. Foster can discuss the best options for restoring your teeth. Composite fillings, along with silver amalgam fillings, are the most widely used today.  Because composite fillings are tooth colored, they can be closely matched to the color of existing teeth, and are more aesthetically suited for use in front teeth or the more visible areas of the teeth.

As with most dental restorations, composite fillings are not permanent and may someday have to be replaced.  They are very durable, and will last many years, giving you a long lasting, beautiful smile.

**Reasons for composite fillings:**

Chipped teeth.

Closing space between two teeth.

Cracked or broken teeth.

Decayed teeth.

Worn teeth.

**How are composite fillings placed?**

Composite fillings are usually placed in one appointment.  While the tooth is numb, your dentist will remove decay as necessary.  The space will then be thoroughly cleaned and carefully prepared before the new filling is placed.  If the decay was near the nerve of the tooth, a special medication will be applied for added protection.  The composite filling will then be precisely placed, shaped, and polished, restoring your tooth to its original shape and function.

It is normal to experience sensitivity to hot and cold when composite fillings are first placed, however this will subside shortly after your tooth acclimates to the new filling.

You will be given care instructions at the conclusion of your treatment.  Good oral hygiene practices, eating habits, and regular dental visits will aid in the life of your new fillings.

Crowns (Caps)

A crown (or cap) is a covering that encases the entire tooth surface restoring it to its original shape and size.  A crown protects and strengthens tooth structure that cannot be restored with fillings or other types of restorations.

Although there are several types of crowns, porcelain (tooth colored crown) are the most popular.  They are highly durable and will last many years, but like most dental restorations, they may eventually need to be replaced.  Porcelain crowns are made to match the shape, size, and color or your teeth giving you a natural, long-lasting beautiful smile.

**Reasons for crowns:**

Broken or fractured teeth.

Cosmetic enhancement.

Decayed teeth.

Fractured fillings.

Large fillings.

Tooth has a root canal.

**What does getting a crown involve?**

A crown procedure usually requires two appointments.  Your first appointment will include taking several highly accurate molds (or impressions) that will be used to create your custom crown.  A mold will also be used to create a temporary crown, which will stay on your tooth for approximately two weeks until your new crown is fabricated by a dental laboratory.

While the tooth is numb, Dr. Foster will prepare the tooth by removing any decay and shaping the surface to properly fit the crown.  Once these details are accomplished, your temporary crown will be placed with temporary cement and your bite will be checked to ensure you are biting properly.

At your second appointment your temporary crown will be removed, the tooth will be cleaned, and your new crown will be carefully placed to ensure both the spacing and bite are accurate.

You will be given care instructions and encouraged to have regular dental visits to check your new crown.

Dentures & Partial Dentures

A denture is a removable dental appliance replacement for missing teeth and surrounding tissue.  They are made to closely resemble your natural teeth and may even enhance your smile.

There are two types of dentures - *complete* and *partial* dentures.  Complete dentures are used when all of the teeth are missing, while partial dentures are used when some natural teeth remain.  A partial denture not only fills in the spaces created by missing teeth, it prevents other teeth from shifting.

A Complete denture may be either “*conventional*” or “*immediate*.”  A conventional type is made after the teeth have been removed and the gum tissue has healed, usually taking 4 to 6 weeks.  During this time the patient will go without teeth.  Immediate dentures are made in advance and immediately placed after the teeth are removed, thus preventing the patient from having to be without teeth during the healing process.  Once the tissues shrink and heal, adjustments or a new denture will have to be made.

Dentures are very durable appliances and will last many years, but may have to be remade, repaired, or readjusted due to normal wear.

**Reasons for dentures:**

Complete Denture - Loss of all teeth in an arch.

Partial Denture - Loss of several teeth in an arch.

Enhancing smile and facial tissues.

Improving chewing, speech, and digestion.

**What does getting dentures involve?**

The process of getting dentures requires several appointments, usually over several weeks.  Highly accurate impressions (molds) and measurements are taken and used to create your custom denture.  Several “try-in” appointments may be necessary to ensure proper shape, color, and fit.  At the final appointment, Dr. Foster will precisely adjust and place the completed denture, ensuring a natural and comfortable fit.

It is normal to experience increased saliva flow, some soreness, and possible speech and chewing difficulty, however this will subside as your muscles and tissues get used to the new dentures.

You will be given care instructions for your new dentures.  Proper cleaning of your new dental appliance, good oral hygiene, and regular dental visits will aid in the life of your new dentures.

Fixed Bridges

A dental bridge is a fixed (non-removable) appliance and is an excellent way to replace missing teeth.

There are several types of bridges.  You and Dr. Foster will discuss the best options for your particular case.  The “traditional bridge” is the most popular type and is usually made of porcelain. This type of bridge consists to two crowns that go over two anchoring teeth (abutment teeth) and are attached to pontics (artificial teeth), filling the gap created by one or more missing teeth.

Dental bridges are highly durable and will last many years, however they may need replacement or need to be re-cemented due to normal wear.

**Reasons for a fixed bridge:**

Fill space of missing teeth.

Maintain facial shape.

Prevent remaining teeth from drifting out of position.

Restore chewing and speaking ability.

Restore your smile.

Upgrade from a removable partial denture to a permanent dental appliance.

**What does getting a fixed bridge involve?**

Getting a bridge usually requires two or more visits.  While the teeth are numb, the two anchoring teeth are prepared by removing a portion of enamel to allow for a crown.  Next, a highly accurate impression (mold) is made which will be sent to a dental laboratory where the bridge will be fabricated.  In addition, a temporary bridge will be made and worn for several weeks until your next appointment.

At the second visit, your permanent bridge will be carefully checked, adjusted, and cemented to achieve a proper fit.  Occasionally Dr. Foster may only temporarily cement the bridge, allowing your teeth and tissue time to get used to the new bridge.  The new bridge will be permanently cemented at a later time.

You will receive care instructions at the conclusion of the procedure.  Proper brushing, flossing and regular dental visits will aid in the life of your new permanent bridge.

Root Canal Therapy

Root canal therapy is needed when the nerve of a tooth is affected by decay or infection.  In order to save the tooth, the pulp (the living tissue inside the tooth), nerves, bacteria, and any decay are removed and the resulting space is filled with special, medicated, dental materials, which restore the tooth to its full function.

Having a root canal done on a tooth is the treatment of choice to save a tooth that otherwise would die and have to be removed.  Many patients believe that removing a tooth that has problems is the solution, but what is not realized is that extracting (pulling) a tooth will ultimately be more costly and cause significant problems for adjacent teeth.

Root canal treatment is highly successful and usually lasts a lifetime, although on occasion, a tooth will have to be retreated due to new infections.

**Signs and symptoms for possible root canal therapy:**

An abscess (or pimple) on the gums.

Sensitivity to hot and cold.

Severe toothache pain.

Sometimes no symptoms are present.

Swelling and/or tenderness.

**Reasons for root canal therapy:**

Decay has reached the tooth pulp (the living tissue inside the tooth).

Infection or abscess has developed inside the tooth or at the root tip.

Injury or trauma to the tooth.

**What does root canal therapy involve?**

A root canal procedure requires one or more appointments and can be performed by Dr. Foster or an endodontist (a root canal specialist).

While the tooth is numb, a rubber dam (a sheet of rubber) will be placed around the tooth to keep it dry and free of saliva.  An access opening is made on top of the tooth and a series of root canal files are placed into the opening, one at a time, removing the pulp, nerve tissue, and bacteria.  If tooth decay is present, it will also be removed with special dental instruments.

Once the tooth is thoroughly cleaned, it will be sealed with either a permanent filling or, if additional appointments are needed, a temporary filling will be placed.

At the next appointment, usually a week later, the roots and the inside cavity of the tooth will be filled and sealed with special dental materials.  A filling will be placed to cover the opening on top of the tooth.  In addition, all teeth that have root canal treatment should have a crown (cap) placed.  This will protect the tooth and prevent it from breaking, and restore it to its full function.

After treatment, your tooth may still be sensitive, but this will subside as the inflammation diminishes and the tooth has healed.

You will be given care instructions after each appointment.  Good oral hygiene practices and regular dental visits will aid in the life of your root canal treatment.