



## Glossary

Dental Terms

Insurance Terms

### Dental Terms

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#### Teeth

##### **Bicuspid/premolars**

The teeth with two rounded points located between the eye teeth (cuspids) and the molars.

##### **Centrals/laterals**

The four front teeth.

##### **Cusp**

The pointed or rounded part of a tooth's biting surface.

##### **Cuspids**

The teeth near the front of the mouth that come to a single point. Sometimes called the "eye teeth" or "canines."

##### **Molars**

Teeth with a broad chewing surface for grinding food, located in the back of the mouth.

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## Endodontics

Treatment of the root and nerve of the tooth.

### **Periapical**

The area surrounding the end of a tooth root.

### **Post and core**

An anchor placed in the tooth root following a root canal to strengthen the tooth and help hold a crown (cap) in place.

### **Pulp**

The blood vessels and nerve tissue inside a tooth.

### **Root canal treatment**

The removal of the pulp tissue of a tooth due to decay or injury.

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## Orthodontics

Straightening or moving misaligned teeth and/or jaws with braces and/or surgery.

### **Malocclusion**

Incorrect position of biting or chewing surfaces of the upper and lower teeth.

### **Retainer**

A device used to stabilize teeth following orthodontic treatment.

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## Pediatric Dentistry

The dental specialty devoted to the treatment of children.

### **Nursing bottle syndrome**

Severe decay in baby teeth due to sleeping with a bottle of milk or juice. The drink's natural sugars combine with bacteria in the mouth to produce acid that decays teeth.

### **Pediatric dentist**

A specialist who treats children from birth through adolescence.

### **Sealant**

A thin plastic material used to cover the biting surface of a child's tooth to prevent tooth decay.

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## **Periodontics**

Treatment of gums, tissue and bone that supports the teeth.

### **Gingivitis**

An inflammation of the gums surrounding the teeth caused by a buildup of plaque or food particles.

### **Periodontitis/gum disease**

Chronic inflammation and destruction of supporting bone and tissue membrane around the roots of teeth.

### **Root planing**

A treatment of periodontal disease that involves scraping the roots of a tooth to remove bacteria and tartar.

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## **Prosthodontics**

Replacement of missing teeth with artificial materials, such as a bridge or denture.

### **Bridges**

Nonremovable tooth replacements attached to adjoining natural teeth when one or a few teeth are missing.

### **Dentures**

Removable artificial teeth in a plastic base that rests directly on the gums. A denture may be complete or partial depending on the number of missing natural teeth.

### **Implant**

A support for a bridge or denture that has been surgically placed into bone.

### **Overdenture**

A prosthetic device supported by implants or the roots of at least two natural teeth to provide better stability for the denture.

### **Pontic**

The portion of a dental bridge that replaces missing teeth.

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## **Restorations**

Replacement of missing or damaged tooth structure with artificial materials.

### **Amalgam**

A silver filling. Used for more than a century, amalgam fillings are proven to be safe, cost-effective and durable.

### **Cast restoration**

A procedure that uses a model of the tooth (an impression) to make a casting which replaces missing parts.  
Example: a crown.

**Crown/jacket/cap**

The artificial covering of a tooth with metal, porcelain or porcelain fused to metal. Crowns cover teeth weakened by decay or severely damaged or chipped.

**Inlay**

A solid filling cast to fit the missing portion of the tooth and cemented into place. An onlay covers one or more tooth cusps.

**Resin/composite**

Tooth-colored filling material used primarily for front teeth. Although cosmetically superior, it is generally less durable than other materials.

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**Other Dental Terms****Attrition**

The normal wearing down of the surface of a tooth from chewing.

**Bleaching**

A technique that lightens the color of heavily stained teeth.

**Bonding**

A technique to bind a filling or filling material to a tooth. Bonding materials may be used to repair chipped, cracked, misshapen or discolored teeth or to fill in a gap between teeth.

**Bruxism**

Involuntary clenching or grinding of the teeth.

**Caries**

Tooth decay, which leads to a cavity.

**Facing**

A plastic or porcelain surface placed on the front of a tooth or crown for a natural appearance.

**Impacted tooth**

A tooth beneath the gum tissue that lies against another tooth, under bone or soft tissue, which is unlikely to grow out on its own.

**Laminate veneer**

A thin plastic or porcelain shell applied to the front of a tooth to restore, strengthen or improve its appearance.

**Plaque**

A bacteria-containing substance that collects on the surface of teeth. Plaque can cause decay and gum irritation when it is not removed by daily brushing and flossing.

**Prophylaxis**

A professional cleaning to remove plaque, calculus (mineralized plaque) and stains to help prevent dental disease.

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