

Lost filling or crown? Help is at hand!

Fillings are materials used to fill cavities in the teeth – these can be made from amalgam, composite resin, cast gold, ceramics and other materials. Crowns cover the tops of damaged teeth. It is quite common to lose a filling or a crown – in fact, most of us would undoubtedly have done so in the course of their lives.

Why do fillings and crowns fall out?

The most common reason for the loss of a filling or crown is due to the decay developing underneath it, which destroys part of the tooth, so it no longer has a tight hold on the crown or filling. Eating toffees, or any other chewy sweets can also pull out both fillings and crowns. They can also break if you crunch down on something hard.

What can I do?

A lost filling or crown does not usually constitute a dental emergency, as it does not necessitate immediate treatment. However, it can be very painful because of the exposure of the sensitive tooth tissue to temperature, pressure or air. A lost filling can severely disintegrate your mouth, while the loss of a crown will weaken your tooth making it vulnerable to damage. If you feel that the crown came off, carefully take it out, put it in a safe place and make an appointment to see a dentist as soon as you can.

Just call 02087888588 or visit us at 226a Upper Richmond Road, London and we will be happy to help!

In the meantime, here are some steps you can take before you see a dentist:

- Apply a cotton swab dipped in clove oil to the exposed part of the tooth, but NOT the gums. This temporarily numbs the nerve and soothes toothache. You can buy clove oil at your local pharmacy or drugstore.
- If you still have the crown, clean the inside of it, and coat inside of it with tooth cement, which is available from your local pharmacy. Alternatively, you can use denture adhesive or petroleum jelly. Do NOT use any household glues, as they are not safe.
- If you've lost a filling, you can apply dental cement directly on the tooth surface. This will help to protect and seal the area until you're able to see your dentist.

What will the dentist do?

If you managed to save the crown, it is possible that a dentist will be able to replace it. If you haven't, don't worry. It is a fairly easy procedure to fit a new crown to your tooth. The longer you leave it without seeking professional help, the likely it is that decay will change the shape of your tooth. In this case, the dentist will need to prepare the tooth again to ensure the new crown will fit.

If you lose a filling, your dentist will remove the decay and place a new filling.

Remember, if you seek professional help right away, the treatments are often very simple!