

# INLAY / ONLAY

Inlays and onlays are dental restorations that cover back teeth. The difference between an inlay and an onlay is that an inlay covers a small part of the biting surface of a back tooth while an onlay extends over the biting surface and onto other parts of the tooth. Both of these restorations are cemented into place and cannot be taken off.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. What materials are in an Inlay/Onlay?

Inlays are made of three types of materials:

- Porcelain/Ceramic - most like a natural tooth in color
- Gold Alloy – more resistant to chipping than porcelain.
- Composite/Hybrid –like natural tooth in color

### 2. What are the benefits of having an Inlay/Onlay?

Inlays and Onlays restore a tooth to its natural size and shape.

- They restore the strength and function of a tooth and esthetics are enhanced when using tooth colored materials.
- An Inlay/Onlay presents less risk of fracture and breakage of the tooth than a filling
- Future risk for a root canal may be less than with a full coverage crown

### 3. What are the risks of having an Inlay/Onlay?

- Preparation for an Inlay/Onlay permanently alters the tooth underneath the restoration.
- Preparing for and placing an Inlay/Onlay can irritate the tooth and cause “post-operative” sensitivity which may last up to 3 months.
- Crowns, Inlays and Onlays may need root canal treatment about 5% of the time during the lifetime of the tooth.
- If the cement seal at the edge of the Inlay/Onlay is lost, decay may form at the junction of the restoration and tooth.
- Porcelain may chip and metal may wear over time. If the tooth needs a root canal treatment after the Inlay/Onlay is permanently cemented, the procedure may fracture the restoration and the Inlay/Onlay may need to be replaced.

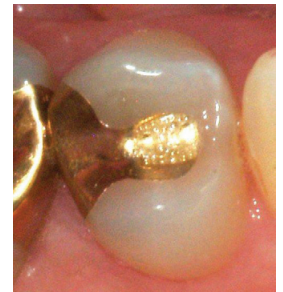
### 4. What are the alternatives to Inlays/Onlays?

Alternatives to placing an Inlay/Onlay are to place a crown, a tooth colored filling, or a silver filling.

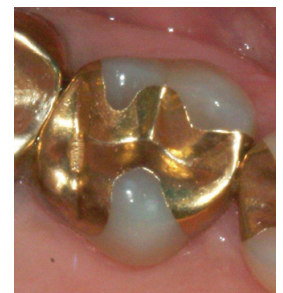
- Crowns may require more tooth reduction in their preparation and therefore weaken remaining tooth structure more than Inlays/Onlays.
- Tooth colored or silver fillings remove decay and may restore teeth to their original shape but are limited because they:
  - Do not improve the strength of broken down teeth.
  - Do not improve the long term function and aesthetics of broken down teeth as well as Inlays/Onlays.

### 5. Are there any post-treatment limitations once I have an Inlay/Onlay?

- A tooth colored Inlay/Onlay may chip or break if used for abnormal activities other than normal chewing.
- A gold Inlay/Onlay may wear over years of use.



Gold Inlays



Gold Onlays



Silver fillings replaced by porcelain Inlays/Onlays