

## Dental Health: Dental Bonding

Dental bonding is a procedure in which a tooth-colored resin material (a durable plastic material) is applied and hardened with a special light, which ultimately "bonds" the material to the tooth to restore or improve person's smile.

### For What Conditions Is Dental Bonding Considered?

Dental bonding is an option that can be considered:

- To repair decayed teeth (composite resins are used to fill cavities)
- To repair chipped or cracked teeth
- To improve the appearance of discolored teeth
- To close spaces between teeth
- To make teeth look longer
- To change the shape of teeth
- As a cosmetic alternative to amalgam fillings
- To protect a portion of the tooth's root that has been exposed when gums recede

### What's the Procedure for Having a Tooth Bonded?

- **Preparation.** Little advance preparation is needed for dental bonding. Anesthesia is often not necessary unless the bonding is being used to fill a decayed tooth. Your dentist will use a shade guide to select a composite resin color that will closely match the color of your tooth.
- **The bonding process.** Next, the surface of the tooth will be roughened and a conditioning liquid applied. These procedures help the bonding material adhere to the tooth. The tooth-colored, puttylike resin is then applied, molded and smoothed to the desired shape. An ultraviolet light or laser is then used to harden the material. After the material is hardened, your dentist will further trim and shape it, and polish it to match the sheen of the rest of the tooth surface.
- **Time-to-completion.** The procedure takes about 30 to 60 minutes per tooth to complete.

### What Are the Advantages and Disadvantages of Dental Bonding?

- **Advantages:** Bonding is among the easiest and least expensive of cosmetic dental procedures. Unlike [veneers](#) and [crowns](#), which are customized tooth coverings that must be manufactured in a laboratory, bonding usually can be done in one office visit unless several teeth are involved. Another advantage, compared with veneers and crowns, is that the least amount of tooth enamel is removed. Also, unless dental bonding is being performed to fill a [cavity](#), anesthesia is usually not required.
- **Disadvantages:** Although the material used in dental bonding is somewhat stain resistant, it does not resist stains as well as crowns. Another disadvantage is that the bonding materials do not last as long nor are as strong as other restorative procedures, such as crowns, veneers, or [fillings](#). Additionally, bonding materials can chip and break off the tooth.