



Your Inlay Visit

Let me take a moment to give you some more information regarding the treatment we discussed today. As I mentioned, sometimes teeth just need more than a filling. Fillings are fine when there is adequate tooth structure but....and, yes, there is always a but, when there is minimal tooth structure left we need to think about different choices to restore the tooth.

A rule of thumb that is often used is as follows:

If there is more tooth than filling, a filling is fine. If there are equal amounts of tooth and filling then perhaps an inlay or onlay is indicated and if there is little tooth left to hold that filling or inlay, well, you need a crown (cap).

Inlays (the restoration is confined to the inner part of the tooth) or **onlays** (the restoration replaces one or more of the cusps of the tooth) are usually created in the dental laboratory and are made of a wide variety of materials. They can be made of porcelain, composite or some other similar material. The two things that all of these materials have in common are 1) strength and 2) the ability to be bonded to the tooth.



The procedure for creating an inlay or onlay starts very much like a filling. Using a local anesthetic we will numb your tooth and then proceed to remove all of the old filling material, decay and weakened tooth structure. Here is where the procedure changes. Instead of filling the tooth with silver (amalgam) or composite (white filling) we will take an impression of your tooth. This impression is sent to the dental laboratory. At your next visit we will **bond** the restoration to place.



Bonding, a relatively new concept in dentistry, was created in order to enhance the retention of dental restorations. Using a mild conditioning agent we first etch your tooth. Next we place a fine resin liquid that fills into all of the small grooves created by the conditioning agent. These materials are usually light cured (hardened by shining a bright light onto the tooth). We then insert the inlay/onlay with a resin cement that is also light cured and bonds itself to the previously mentioned liquid resin. The bonded restoration is highly retentive, long lasting and beautiful to look at....just like a natural tooth.

If you have any questions regarding our recommendation for an inlay/onlay please feel free to ask any of us at any time.

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