

Resin Indirect Restorations

Inlay and onlay restorations

When the biting surface of a back tooth needs a restoration, an excellent choice is often a resin inlay or onlay.

The resin material is a mixture of microscopic particles and acrylic resin that is shaped and cured for strength.

Inlays and onlays are called “indirect restorations” because they are fabricated outside of the tooth and then placed on the tooth in a separate step.

Choosing between inlays and onlays

We’ll choose between an inlay and an onlay depending on how much of your tooth structure has been lost. An inlay fits within the grooves of the tooth’s biting surface, like a filling, while an onlay also covers one or more cusps of the tooth.

Both kinds of restorations are precision-crafted in a dental laboratory, so it may take two or more appointments to restore your tooth with a resin inlay or onlay.



Fitting restoration on model



Bonding restoration to tooth



Resin inlay

Placing a resin inlay or onlay

On your first visit, we numb the area to make you comfortable. We may also use a rubber dam to protect your mouth and the back of your throat while we work.

Using the handpiece, we remove any decay and shape the tooth, so it will securely hold the restoration. Next we take an impression of your teeth. The dental lab uses this impression to make an accurate model of your mouth, and then they use the model to create an inlay or onlay that precisely fits your tooth and bite. In the meantime, we often place a temporary restoration to protect your tooth.

On your next visit, we remove the temporary restoration and try in your new resin restoration. We check the fit, and when everything is right, we bond the resin inlay or onlay in place.

The benefits of resin inlays and onlays

A resin restoration has several benefits. Like all restorations, it protects your tooth. But in addition, a resin inlay or onlay—

- ❖ expands and contracts like natural tooth structure.
- ❖ is gentle on the opposing tooth when you chew.
- ❖ can be colored to look like natural teeth.