

# Mississauga Dental Specialists

*Braces Invisalign Teeth Gums & Implants*

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## **Cracked Teeth**

Cracked and fractured teeth are common dental problems. As people retain their natural teeth longer (due to advances in dental technology), the likelihood of cracked teeth increases. There are many reasons why teeth may crack, for example, biting on hard objects, trauma, grinding and clenching of teeth. All of these behaviours place the teeth under extra strain and render them more susceptible to cracking.

When a tooth is cracked, pain can become momentarily debilitating. In the absence of pressure on the crack, there may be no discomfort. However, as the cracked tooth performs a biting action, the crack widens. The pulp and inner workings of the tooth then become exposed, and painful irritation occurs. As pressure is released again, the two parts of the crack fuse back together, and pain subsides. If left untreated, with ingress of bacteria, the pulp becomes irreversibly damaged and constantly painful. The resulting pulp infection can affect the bone and soft tissue surrounding the tooth.

### **Symptoms of a cracked tooth may include:**

- Unexplained pain when eating
- Sensitivity to warm and cold foods
- Pain with no obvious cause
- Difficulty pinpointing the location of the pain

### **How are cracks in the teeth treated?**

There are many different types of cracked teeth. Some can only be exposed using X-ray machines, while others are clearly visible to the naked eye. It is important to note that cracks are rarely observed on radiographs; however, fractures may be detected. In cases where the tooth pulp is affected, root canal therapy is the most viable treatment option. The pulp, nerves, and vessels of the tooth will be removed, and the resulting space will be filled with gutta-percha. A crown or filling will be added to stabilize the tooth, and it will continue to function as normal.

When the crack is too severe for the tooth to be saved, the dentist will perform an extraction. There are a number of replacement options in this case, such as bridges, dental implants and partial dentures. All of these structures can restore biting, chewing, and speaking functions.

**If you have any questions or concerns about cracked teeth, please contact our endodontist.**