Crowns and Bridgework

What is a crown?
Dental crowns (also sometimes referred to as ‘dental caps’ or ‘tooth caps’) cover over and encase the tooth on which they are cemented. Dentists use crowns when rebuilding broken or decayed teeth, as a way to preserve teeth and as a method to improve the cosmetic appearance of a tooth. Crowns are made in a dental laboratory by a dental technician who uses moulds of your teeth made by your dentist.

The type of crown your dentist recommends will depend on the tooth involved and sometimes on your preference. They include porcelain crowns, porcelain-bonded-to-metal crowns, which combine the appearance of tooth coloured material with the strength of metal, gold alloy crowns and acrylic crowns.

Why are crowns more expensive than fillings?
A crown is more complicated than a filling. Laboratory fees are incurred in its preparation and the materials used are more expensive than normal filling materials.

Two or three visits are usually required for the dentist to reduce the size of the existing tooth, make a mould, fit a temporary crown and finally adhere the permanent crown in place.

What is a bridge?
A bridge is an appliance permanently fixed in the mouth to replace missing teeth. It uses remaining teeth to support the new artificial tooth or teeth.

A bridge is usually made up of two crowns for the teeth on either side of the gap -- these two anchoring teeth are called abutment teeth -- and a false tooth/teeth is rigidly attached in between. The false teeth are called pontics. The bridge can be made from gold, alloys, porcelain or a combination of these materials.

An enamel-bonded bridge uses a metal or porcelain framework to which the artificial teeth are attached, and then resin bonded to supporting teeth.

Your dentist can advise which type of bridge is right for you to suit your individual needs.