

Predictable management of the cracked tooth

Q How can I treat cracked teeth more efficiently?

A The diagnosis of cracked tooth is difficult in the early stage because the symptoms are not consistent, and often a crack line is not visible. Early detection and proper treatment of cracked tooth are important because all cracks have the potential to become a split tooth.

1. Be reminded that cracked tooth occurs usually on mandibular and maxillary first molars in patients in their 40s and 50s. If the tooth has a large restoration such as gold inlay or amalgam filling, then cracks occur easily.¹⁻³
2. If pulp status is reversible pulpitis, remove the old restoration and crack line carefully because cracks are always colonized by bacterial biofilms. Fill the cavity with bonded direct or indirect restoration.^{2,4-6} If biting pain persists, then make a provisional crown and reevaluate the necessity of root canal treatment.
3. If pulp status is irreversible pulpitis or necrotic, perform root canal treatment initially and make a provisional crown.^{2,4,7} If symptom disappears, then make a final crown.
4. If a crack extends subgingivally and deep periodontal pocket is associated with the crack, explain the poor prognosis to the patient and decide whether to treat or extract the cracked tooth.⁸

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