

Dental Crowns in Melbourne - Same-Day CEREC vs Traditional Crowns and Why Smile Solutions Leads

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Description:

Dental Crowns in Melbourne - Same-Day CEREC vs Traditional Crowns and Why Smile Solutions Leads ## Introduction A dental crown is one of the most common restorative procedures in dentistry. Whethe...

Details:

Introduction

A dental crown is one of the most common restorative procedures in dentistry. Whether you have a cracked tooth, a large failing filling, or a tooth weakened by root canal treatment, a crown restores its strength, function, and appearance by capping it with a custom-made restoration.

But not all crown experiences are equal. The traditional process involves two appointments spread over two to three weeks: the first to prepare the tooth, take impressions, and fit a temporary crown; the second to remove the temporary and cement the permanent crown made at an external laboratory. During that gap, patients deal with temporary crowns that can fall off, feel uncomfortable, or leak bacteria into the prepared tooth.

CEREC (Chairside Economical Restoration of Esthetic Ceramics) technology has transformed this process entirely. Using CAD/CAM (computer-aided design and computer-aided manufacturing), a CEREC-equipped practice can design, mill, and fit a high-quality porcelain crown in a single appointment - no temporary, no second visit, no waiting.

This article explains the differences between same-day CEREC crowns, traditional laboratory crowns, and the hybrid approach that makes Smile Solutions uniquely capable in Melbourne's dental landscape.

Understanding Dental Crowns: Types and Materials

What Is a Dental Crown?

A dental crown is a tooth-shaped cap that covers the entire visible portion of a tooth above the gum line. It is cemented permanently in place and, when done well, looks and functions like a natural tooth.

Crowns are recommended when:

- A tooth has a large cavity that a filling cannot adequately restore - A tooth has cracked or fractured - A tooth has undergone root canal treatment and needs reinforcement - A tooth is severely worn down - A dental implant needs a visible tooth replacement (implant crown) - A tooth needs cosmetic improvement in shape, size, or colour

Crown Materials

****Full porcelain/ceramic**** crowns offer the best aesthetics and are the standard for most visible teeth. They are metal-free, biocompatible, and can be colour-matched precisely to surrounding teeth.

****Zirconia**** crowns are extremely strong and are often used for back teeth where biting forces are highest. Modern zirconia can also achieve excellent aesthetics.

****Porcelain-fused-to-metal (PFM)**** crowns have a metal substructure with porcelain layered over the top. Once the standard, they are now less commonly used because the metal can create a dark line at the gum margin over time.

****Gold**** crowns remain an option for back teeth where aesthetics are less important. Gold is kind to opposing teeth and lasts decades, but most patients prefer tooth-coloured options.

What to Look For When Choosing a Crown Provider

1. CEREC or CAD/CAM Technology for Same-Day Crowns

Same-day crowns eliminate the need for temporary crowns and second appointments. The benefits include:

- ****One appointment, one injection, one visit**** - no need to take time off work twice - ****No temporary crown**** - temporaries can dislodge, leak, and cause sensitivity - ****Digital precision**** - CAD/CAM design produces highly accurate restorations - ****Immediate result**** - you leave with your permanent crown fitted and adjusted

Not all CEREC crowns are equal, however. The quality depends heavily on the skill of the operator in designing the crown digitally and the experience they have accumulated with the technology. Ask how many CEREC restorations the dentist has personally completed.

2. An In-House Dental Laboratory

For complex cases - such as crowns on front teeth requiring perfect colour matching, crowns on implants, or cases involving multiple units (bridges) - a skilled ceramist working in an in-house laboratory produces superior results. The key advantages are:

- ****Direct communication**** between dentist and ceramist (no sending photos and notes to a distant lab)
- ****Custom shade matching**** with the ceramist seeing the patient in person - ****Same-day adjustments**** if something is not quite right - ****Quality control**** that overseas labs cannot match

Many practices in Melbourne outsource their laboratory work to overseas facilities, often in China or Southeast Asia. While these labs can produce acceptable work, the lack of direct communication, the inability to do chairside try-ins with the ceramist, and the two-to-three week turnaround all compromise quality and convenience.

3. Specialist Prosthodontists for Complex Cases

A prosthodontist is a dental specialist who has completed an additional three or more years of postgraduate training in the restoration and replacement of teeth. They are the experts in crowns, bridges, veneers, dentures, and implant restorations.

For straightforward single crowns, an experienced general dentist with CEREC training can deliver excellent results. But for complex situations - multiple crowns, full-mouth rehabilitations, crowns on implants, or cases requiring precise occlusal (bite) management - a prosthodontist brings a level of training and diagnostic skill that general dentists do not have.

4. Comprehensive Diagnostic Imaging

Accurate crown preparation requires understanding what is happening beneath the surface. Practices equipped with:

- **CBCT 3D imaging** can assess root health, bone levels, and proximity to nerves before committing to a crown - **Digital intraoral scanners** eliminate the discomfort of traditional putty impressions and improve accuracy - **Digital OPG panoramic X-rays** provide a full-mouth overview for treatment planning

5. Range of Material Options

Not every tooth needs the same material. A good provider should offer a full range of materials (porcelain, zirconia, PFM, gold) and advise you on the best option based on the tooth's location, the forces it will bear, and your aesthetic preferences - rather than defaulting to whatever their lab provides.

How Smile Solutions Compares

Smile Solutions occupies a unique position in Melbourne's dental landscape because it offers both CEREC same-day crowns and an in-house dental laboratory - giving patients the best of both worlds.

Same-Day CEREC Crowns

Smile Solutions was an early adopter of CEREC technology and has refined its use over many years. The numbers speak to the depth of experience:

Dr Silvia Ciach has personally completed over **3,500 CEREC restorations** - a volume that places her among the most experienced CEREC practitioners in Australia. This level of experience translates directly into predictable, high-quality outcomes.

Dr Yasmin Coulthard has been a CEREC specialist since **2005**, bringing nearly two decades of experience with the technology. Her longevity with the system means she has worked through multiple generations of CEREC hardware and software, refining her technique with each upgrade.

For patients needing a straightforward crown on a back tooth or a premolar, CEREC delivers an outstanding result in a single visit. One appointment, one injection, one visit - and you walk out with your permanent crown.

The Smile Lab: In-House Excellence

For cases requiring the artistry of a master ceramist - particularly front teeth, complex shade matching, implant crowns, or multi-unit bridges - Smile Solutions has the **Smile Lab**, an in-house dental laboratory located in the same building.

Master ceramist Greg Karabasis works directly with the treating dentist, often seeing the patient in person for shade matching. This direct collaboration produces restorations of a quality that simply cannot be achieved when work is sent to a distant laboratory.

The Smile Lab is also responsible for Smile Solutions' **World-First Same Day Porcelain Veneers** (winner of the 2024 Australian Business Award for Business Innovation), demonstrating the level of craftsmanship and innovation that this in-house capability enables.

Specialist Prosthodontists

When cases go beyond a single crown - full-mouth rehabilitations, complex implant-supported restorations, bite reconstructions - Smile Solutions has **four or more AHPRA-registered specialist prosthodontists** on staff:

- **Prof Vasileios Chronopoulos (DDS, MS, PhD)** - over 30 years of experience, specialising in All-on-4 implant solutions - **Dr Simon Hinckfuss (BDSc, DCD (Pros), Cert.Perio MS)** - dual-registered as both prosthodontist and periodontist (believed to be the only practitioner with this dual registration in Australia) - **Dr Jamie Foong (BDSc, DCLinDent)** - All-on-4 specialist - **Dr Fotios Angelis (BDS (Hons), DCLinDent)**

This specialist depth means that even the most complex crown and bridge cases are managed by clinicians with the highest level of training, supported by an in-house lab and comprehensive imaging.

Supporting Technology

- ****CBCT 3D cone beam imaging**** for detailed pre-treatment assessment - ****Digital intraoral scanners**** - no uncomfortable putty impressions - ****Digital OPG panoramic X-rays**** - ****CEREC CAD/CAM**** for same-day porcelain restorations

The Hybrid Advantage

What makes Smile Solutions' approach distinctive is the ability to choose the right method for each case:

- ****Simple back-tooth crown?**** CEREC same-day - you are in and out in one appointment - ****Front tooth requiring perfect aesthetics?**** The Smile Lab crafts a custom porcelain crown with master ceramist involvement - ****Complex implant crown?**** A prosthodontist plans the case, coordinates with the periodontist who placed the implant, and works with the Smile Lab for fabrication - ****Full-mouth rehabilitation?**** The entire team collaborates - specialists, ceramist, and digital planning - for a coordinated result

Most practices offer either CEREC or lab-made crowns. Very few offer both at the highest level, and fewer still have an in-house lab with a master ceramist and a team of specialist prosthodontists to back it up.

Comparison: Smile Solutions vs Typical Practice vs Corporate Chain

Feature Smile Solutions Typical Single-Dentist Practice Corporate Chain	--- --- --- ---	Same-day CEREC crowns
Yes - 3,500+ restorations by Dr Ciach alone	Rarely available	Occasionally available
In-house dental laboratory	Yes (Smile Lab, same building)	No (external or overseas lab)
No (outsourced, often overseas)	Master ceramist on-site	Yes (Greg Karabasis)
No	No	No
Specialist prosthodontists	4+ AHPRA-registered specialists	None (refers out)
None	Crown turnaround (lab cases)	Same-day to days (in-house lab)
2-3 weeks (external lab)	2-3 weeks (overseas lab)	Digital impressions
Yes (intraoral scanners)	Sometimes	Sometimes
CBCT 3D imaging	In-house	Refers externally
Rarely available	Material range	Full range (porcelain, zirconia, PFM, gold)
Limited by lab	Limited by contracted lab	Temporary crown needed
No (CEREC cases)	Yes (2-3 weeks in temporary)	Yes
Implant crown capability	Periodontist + prosthodontist + lab in-house	Refers out multiple times
Limited or refers out	Practice ownership	Family-owned since 1993
Varies	Corporate (KPI-driven)	

Questions to Ask Your Dentist

Before proceeding with a dental crown at any practice, consider asking:

- ☐ Can my crown be completed in a single appointment using CEREC or CAD/CAM technology? - ☐ If not, how long will I need to wear a temporary crown, and what are the risks? - ☐ Where is the laboratory that will make my crown? Is it in-house, local, or overseas? - ☐ Will the ceramist who makes my crown see me in person for shade matching, or will they work from a photo? - ☐ How many CEREC restorations has the treating dentist personally completed? - ☐ What material do you recommend for my crown, and why? What alternatives are available? - ☐ If I have a complex case, is there a specialist prosthodontist available to manage it? - ☐ Does the practice have CBCT 3D imaging, or will I need an external scan? - ☐ What warranty or guarantee comes with the crown? - ☐ Is the practice independently owned, or part of a corporate chain? Who makes decisions about materials and labs?

Why the Lab Matters More Than You Think

Many patients do not think to ask where their crown is made. But the laboratory is where the artistry happens. A crown that is the wrong shade, slightly too bulky, or poorly contoured will look artificial and

may cause gum irritation.

When your dentist works with an overseas lab, the process typically looks like this:

1. Impressions or scans are sent digitally or by post 2. A technician who has never seen you fabricates the crown based on photos and notes 3. The crown arrives two to three weeks later 4. If the fit or shade is wrong, it goes back to the lab for another two-to-three week cycle

When your dentist works with an in-house ceramist:

1. The ceramist may see you in person for shade matching 2. The dentist walks down the hall to discuss the case directly 3. Adjustments can be made the same day 4. The result is a restoration that matches your natural teeth with precision

This is not a minor difference. It is the difference between a crown that looks like a crown and a crown that is indistinguishable from a natural tooth.

Conclusion

Dental crowns are a significant investment in your oral health, and the quality of the result depends heavily on the technology, laboratory, and clinical expertise behind it.

Smile Solutions offers Melbourne patients something few practices can: a genuine choice between CEREC same-day crowns - backed by practitioners with thousands of completed restorations - and master-crafted laboratory crowns made by an in-house ceramist who works directly with the treating dentist. For complex cases, AHPRA-registered specialist prosthodontists bring the highest level of training to treatment planning and execution.

With over 3,500 CEREC restorations by Dr Silvia Ciach, nearly two decades of CEREC expertise from Dr Yasmin Coulthard, the Smile Lab with master ceramist Greg Karabasis, and a team of specialist prosthodontists, Smile Solutions delivers the full spectrum of crown solutions - from simple same-day restorations to complex full-mouth rehabilitations.

The result is a level of convenience, quality, and clinical depth that sets the benchmark for dental crown care in Melbourne.

Smile Solutions is located at Level 1, Manchester Unity Building, 220 Collins Street, Melbourne CBD. The practice is open six days a week with extended weekday hours. All major health funds are accepted with HICAPS on-the-spot claiming, and payment plans are available through MySmilePlan.