

Obtaining Patient Approval for Final Cementation of a Crown, Bridge, or Veneer



Written by:
Paul Sauchelli,
DMD, JD
DentistCare
Practice Management
Consultant

Patients often have a change of heart about a restoration once it has been permanently cemented or bonded in place. Many disputes between a dentist and patient result from patient complaints regarding the aesthetics, materials used, feel, and useful lifespan of a final fixed prosthodontic restoration.

Even though you obtained the patient's informed consent, look to revisit certain aspects of the patient's pretreatment consent and conversations you may have had during that process prior to final placement of the restoration. Spend a few minutes with your patient before final cementation to review and confirm their consent before performing this irreversible procedure; your discussion can help avoid misunderstandings, more accurately set the patient's expectations, and reinforce their obligations.

Prior to cementation, review the type and nature of material used in the patient's crowns, bridges, or veneers, including the alternatives they were offered. Discuss the useful life of the restoration. Don't rush the process. Allow the patient sufficient opportunity to view the prosthesis both outside their mouth and in place before the final cementation/bonding. Photograph the restoration both outside and within the patient's dentition and obtain the patient's approval of the color, shape, feel, and overall appearance. Document their affirmation in the record and ask them to initial the chart entry.

Make it clear that once the restoration is cemented or bonded permanently, the color, shape, feel, and overall appearance cannot be changed without likely permanent damage to the restoration. It may be necessary to re-fabricate the restoration and additional fees may apply. Mention that removing the restoration following final cementation or bonding may involve significant risk to the underlying teeth. Provide ample opportunity for the patient to ask and have all their questions answered.

Obtaining the patient's "informed affirmation" for final cementation—and documenting it—will go a long way toward managing expectations if the patient later experiences buyer's remorse.

Please call us at 844.223.9648 to discuss this or any other risk management concerns. This service is provided at no extra charge.

ProAssurance underwrites the DentistCare® professional liability insurance program and is committed to treating you fairly.

DentistCare[®]
PROASSURANCE
Treated Fairly

Professional Liability Insurance & Risk Resource Services

ProAssurance Group is rated A+ (Superior) by A.M. Best.

ProAssuranceDentistCare.com • 800.282.6242

