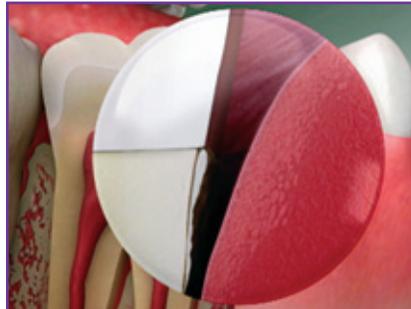


# Margin Decay

While it's true that a crown protects and strengthens a tooth, sometimes decay can start at the margin of a crown, where the tooth meets the crown. Early detection and treatment will protect the tooth and help prevent future problems.



*Plaque at the margin of a crown*



*Infection in the pulp layer*

## Why decay can form next to a crown

Decay can form in the area where the crown meets the tooth structure. This happens because it's one of the toughest spots to keep free of plaque and the bacteria that cause tooth decay.

It's important to treat tooth decay as soon as possible. Once decay has become established, it can grow quickly. If the cavity penetrates the outer enamel layer of the tooth and reaches the softer dentin layer, bacteria can cause an infection in the pulp layer, which contains your tooth's nerves and blood vessels. The only way to treat the infection is by performing root canal therapy to remove the infected tissue.

## Diagnosis and treatment

We'll begin by performing a thorough examination, and then we'll determine the best treatment for you.

If the decay has just started in an area that we can reach, we may be able to remove the decay and restore your tooth with a filling. If the decay has advanced, it's likely that we'll need to replace the crown with a new one. There are several kinds of fillings and crowns, so we'll talk with you about the best one for your situation.

Treatment will re-seal and protect your tooth. By treating the decay as soon as possible, we can often prevent it from spreading and causing unnecessary damage to your tooth, and requiring more complicated, extensive treatment.