**Dental technician’s work**

Dental technicians perform a creative but technical role in the healthcare system. Supporting the work of dentists, they are responsible for creating, adapting and repairing all kinds of dental appliances.

Most dental laboratory technicians learn their craft beginning with simple tasks, such as pouring plaster into an impression, and progress to more complex procedures, such as making porcelain crowns and bridges.

With the impression and the dentists’ notes, the technician creates a tooth or bridge out of wax, carving it with spatulas and handheld instruments. Then a cast is made from the wax model. This is used to produce the device from metal and porcelain.

Both crowns and bridges are fixed prosthetic devices. A crown is used to entirely cover or “cap” a damaged tooth. Besides strengthening a damaged tooth, a crown can be used to improve its appearance, shape or alignment. Porcelain or ceramic crowns can be matched to the color of your natural teeth. Other materials include gold and metal alloys, acrylic and ceramic. These alloys are generally stronger than porcelain and may be recommended for back teeth.

A bridge may be usedif you are missing one or more teeth. Gaps left by missing teeth eventually cause the remaining teeth to rotate or shift into the empty spaces, resulting in a bad bite. The imbalance caused by missing teeth can also lead to gum disease and temporomandibular joint (TMJ) disorders.

Bridges are cemented to the natural teeth or implants surrounding the empty space. These teeth, called abutments, serve as anchors for the bridge. A replacement tooth, called a pontic, is attached to the crowns that cover the abutments.

Dental technician’s work helps dental patients who have lost or damaged their teeth through injury, poor dental health or deterioration due to age. As a result, patients are better able to eat and talk, while their appearance may be improved.

Answer the questions:

1. What are dental technicians responsible for?
2. What are the functions of crowns?
3. What materials can be used for making crowns?
4. Which of them offer greater durability?
5. What is an «abutment»?