

Guide to Cosmetic Dentistry

This guide has been created to better answer the most common questions about cosmetic dentistry.

After reading through the guide visit www.dental-suite.co.uk

Introduction

It's clear what an amazing difference having a smile you are happy with can make to your confidence. Our clients are constantly telling us what an incredible change we have made to their lives. Professionally, socially or one to one your smile speaks for itself, however many people are nervous about the process of cosmetic dentistry and the costs of getting a healthy and beautiful smile.

This guide will answer the questions you have about the process and will go some way to helping you decide if cosmetic dentistry is right for you.

Choosing a Cosmetic Dentist

Finding a highly skilled cosmetic dentist can be the difference between getting the smile you want and a serious disappointment. There are many things to consider, from a cosmetic dentist's credentials and continuing education to a cosmetic dentist's experience with the procedures you want performed. In the below section we've outlined all the things you need to consider.

You may have several types of procedures with each procedure including many steps to achieve your goal of a terrific smile. Just finding a qualified cosmetic dentist can be difficult. Many cosmetic procedures are performed by family dentists, but many often lack the artistic result that makes for a great smile. Cosmetic dentists have taken the time to further their skill level and continued their education which enables them to give their patients a winning smile. Use the navigational links below to explore the many considerations when looking for a cosmetic dentist.

You will place all of your trust in your cosmetic dentist to do everything right when it comes to your cosmetic dentistry procedure. After choosing your dentist, you will leave the rest of the decisions in his or her hands. Make the most important decision of all the right way - find out about the training and experience of your cosmetic dentist and choose the one that is best for you.

The following is a list of places to start when you are gathering a list of potential cosmetic dentists. Remember - this list is designed to give you a start, not make the final decision. There's still a lot of qualification-checking to do once you have a doctor or several doctors in mind.

1. Family members and friends - If anyone you know has had cosmetic dentistry, talk to them. Ask them who they chose, why they chose them and if they were happy with the results.
2. Your family doctor - Your doctor may be able to recommend a cosmetic dentist to you.
3. Directories, commercials, web sites and advertising - Since cosmetic dentistry is a highly competitive field, you will find that many more dentists advertise than do practitioners of other specialties.

Exercise caution when you use advertising to pick a doctor, because the newspapers, magazines, TV stations and Yellow Pages don't check qualifications when they accept advertising pounds.

You've still got some work ahead of you before you select the doctor to perform your cosmetic dentistry procedure, but this should get you started!

HOW DO I KNOW WHAT COLOUR MY VENEERS, CROWNS, CAPS, BRIDGE OR IMPLANTS BE?

Usually, the answer is to whiten your natural teeth to either the level of whiteness you want or to the brightest they can be. Your cosmetic dentist will then have the veneers made to that colour. Teeth are of course not monochromatic, so typically more than one colour is used to create a very natural look. This colour variation is critical in avoiding fake or artificial looking teeth. It is the internal contrast of colours that help create vitality. The internal play of light on the porcelain in the restoration helps to create this vitality. Surface texture is also very important, and helps to break up light reflections and make the veneers, crowns, caps, bridges or implants look more natural. Please review our Procedures section below to learn more about selecting the best shade of whiteness for your smile.

COSMETIC DENTAL PROCEDURES: TEETH WHITENING

Whitening of the teeth is performed for patients who desire a brighter smile. Tooth whitening can be performed to reduce discolouration and staining, or simply to provide the patient with whiter, brighter teeth.

WHAT CAUSES DISCOLOURATION OF A TOOTH?

Tooth enamel discolouration can be caused by staining, aging, or chemical damage to teeth. Some of the more common causes of tooth discolouration are medications, coffee, tea or cigarettes. People who drink significant amounts of cola soft drinks can experience similar staining. Damage to the root may also contribute to discolouration.

Aside from staining, there are other factors that can affect the colour of a tooth. Genetics can play a role. Some people have naturally brighter enamel than others. Disease can also be a factor and certain medications can cause a discolouration of a tooth. If you suspect that there is an underlying medical cause for your tooth discolouration, be sure to inform your cosmetic dentist.

WHAT ARE DENTAL IMPLANTS?

Dental implants are fixtures of titanium which are surgically screwed into your jaw bone. The implant is an anchor for a naturally-appearing false tooth or a set of false teeth. Implants are great for replacing missing teeth. It is important that you have enough bone in the area of the missing teeth for the implants to be attached to. Implants are not only used to replace one tooth, but rather people missing most, if not all, of their teeth benefit greatly as well. Implants are increasingly being used to replace certain types of bridges and removable partial dentures.

WHAT IS TOOTH BONDING?

Bonding is a composite resin filling placed in the back teeth as well as the front teeth. Composites are the solution for restoring decayed teeth, making cosmetic improvements and even changing the colour of your teeth or the reshaping of teeth. Bonding will lighten any stains you may have, close up minor gaps and can be used to correct crooked teeth. Basically, bonding will cover any natural flaws applying a thin coating of a plastic material on the front surface of your teeth. After this, your cosmetic dentist will apply a bonding material and sculpt, colour and shape it to provide a pleasing result. A high-intensity light then hardens the plastic, and the surface is finely polished.

WHAT IS A DENTAL BRIDGE?

A dental bridge is a false tooth, known as a pontic, which is fused between two porcelain crowns to fill in the area left by a missing tooth. The two crowns holding it in place that are attached onto your teeth on each side of the false tooth. This is known as a fixed bridge. This procedure is used to replace one or more missing teeth. Fixed bridges cannot be taken out of your mouth as you might do with removable partial dentures.

In areas of your mouth that are under less stress, such as your front teeth, a cantilever bridge may be used. Cantilever bridges are used when there are teeth on only one side of the open space. Bridges can reduce your risk of gum disease, help correct some bite issues and even improve your speech. Bridges require your commitment to serious oral hygiene, but will last as many ten years or more.

WHAT IS TOOTH CONTOURING AND RESHAPING?

Tooth reshaping, or contouring, is one of few instant treatments now available in cosmetic dentistry. Dental reshaping and contouring is a procedure to correct crooked teeth, chipped teeth, cracked teeth or even overlapping teeth in just one session.

The dental contouring procedure can even be a substitute for braces under certain circumstances. It is also a procedure of subtle changes. A few millimeters of reduction and a few millimeters of tooth-coloured laminate can create a beautiful smile when performed by a cosmetic dentist, with no discomfort to you. Tooth reshaping, or dental contouring, is commonly used to alter the length, shape or position of your teeth.

WHAT ARE DENTURES?

Dentures are removable replacements for missing teeth typically made out of an acrylic resin which at times incorporate porcelain or metal for additional structural support. There are two main types of dentures. Both Complete Dentures and Partial Dentures are finely crafted, custom-fitted. If you properly maintain your dentures they will appear natural and provide a perfect smile. Additionally, dentures help strengthen muscles controlling your expressions that require the support of your teeth, rid you of pronunciation problems caused by missing teeth and aid with chewing.

WHAT ARE COMPOSITE RESIN FILLINGS?

Most of us have had amalgam fillings (silver) or gold filling restorations. Some amalgam fillings were what we have called mercury fillings, as some amalgam fillings contained mercury. Metal fillings were effective, but very conspicuous and tended to blacken in colour over time.

Composite resin dental fillings were created as an alternative to traditional metal dental fillings. Tooth fillings coloured to look like a natural tooth are known as Composite Resin Dental Fillings, are made of a plastic dental resin. Composite Resin Dental Fillings are strong, durable, and make for a very natural looking smile.

WHAT ARE TOOTH CROWNS?

Grinding your teeth, an improper bite, age, fillings and tooth decay can all be contributing factors in the wearing down, cracking or breakage of your teeth. Dental crowns cover the entire visible surface of your affected tooth and add strength, durability and tooth stability.

DENTAL CAPS FOR YOUR TEETH

Many of us find ourselves with teeth that are no longer structurally sound. Root canals, lost fillings, decay below a filling, chipping and cracking of the enamel are things that may lead to large scale defects in a tooth's surface. When the entire surface of the tooth is a problem, but the root system is intact, a cap might be appropriate for you.

DENTAL ROOT CANALS FOR YOUR TEETH

Many of us have heard the comparisons of painful things to the root canal procedure. It's not that bad. There are tiny canals within your tooth that may become infected. This leads to the pulp inside your tooth also becoming diseased. Either your dentist or an endodontist to remove any infection performs the root canal procedure. The canals are then filled and the tooth receives either a filling or a crown. Crowns are more common in most cases as they add strength to the tooth itself. The procedure itself takes one to two visits.

INTRODUCTION: ACCELERATED ORTHODONTICS

To change your smile by changing the appearance of your front teeth you may consider porcelain veneers, bonding, crowns or traditional braces. Accelerated orthodontics is another option for you and your cosmetic dentist to consider. Accelerated orthodontics is a relatively new way to move teeth faster than traditional braces. It can be applied in most cases where orthodontics is the chosen solution. While traditional braces take anywhere from one to three years to give you a great smile, accelerated orthodontics can give you a great smile in only three to eight months in most cases.

WHAT IS COSMETIC GUM SURGERY?

Your gum tissue is like a frame that provides form and shape to the top of your tooth. A less than attractive smile results when the integrity of the gum is compromised or the actual gum between your teeth becomes weak. Usually due to poor hygiene (gum disease), you actually begin to lose gum tissue. Cosmetic dentistry provides many cosmetic solutions such as composite resin bonding, crowns, and veneers to create a great smile. These solutions are usually part of an overall strategy which may involve cosmetic gum surgery. Used to correct a 'gummy smile' (a significant portion of your gum is exposed when you smile), cosmetic gum surgery is the procedure of lengthening your teeth from the neck of the tooth upwards. Your teeth then appear to be longer and much less gum is seen when you smile.

The "Long in the Tooth" Smile - Cosmetic gum surgery, or periodontal plastic surgery, can correct almost any deformity or gingival problems preventing you from a beautiful smile. As we age, our gums may shrink and recede which makes our teeth look longer. While this is often age-related, it can also occur due to a bad bite. A cosmetic dentist or a periodontist can correct this to such an extent, that you'll have a very youthful appearing smile.

The "Gummy Smile" - This is a problem where your teeth appear to be too short. Gum sculpting is often the solution. To solve this, a dentist uses a laser to remove the excess tissue of your "gummy" smile, which then exposes more of your tooth.

WHAT SHOULD A COSMETIC DENTISTRY TREATMENT PLAN LOOK LIKE?

Many people have mentioned that it would be helpful to see what a cosmetic dentistry treatment plan might look like. This will give you a good idea of the analysis and solutions you'll receive from a cosmetic dentist.

The following treatment plan has three key areas (Report of Findings, Treatment Planning Worksheet and Financial Arrangements) that you will be presented with by your cosmetic dentist. Each area should be carefully reviewed with your dentist, and you should ensure that any and all questions you have are answered to your complete understanding.

Jeffrey S. Cummings
REPORT OF FINDINGS

Analysis For (patient name) _____ Date _____

<p>The Following Diagnostic Records Were Analyzed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Full Mouth X-Ray 2. Panoramic Radiographs 3. Periodontal Charting 4. Oral Exam of Existing Restorations 5. Occlusal Analysis 6. Study Models 7. Photographic Series 8. Preview Models 	<p>The Following Risk Factors Were Noted:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____ 6. _____ 7. _____ 8. _____
---	---

Problems:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____
16. _____
17. _____
18. _____

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TREATMENT PLANNING WORKSHEET

Treatment For (patient name) _____ Date _____

STABILIZATION PHASE

(Perio, equilibration, immediate restorative, emergency)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

REFERRAL PHASE

(Get opinions or start treatment by specialist)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

RESTORATION/COSMETIC PHASE

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

PROTECTION PHASE

(Dental appliance, recall)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

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FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Patient _____ Date _____

The approximate fee for your treatment is:

_____ Stabilization / Restoration Phase **
_____ Cosmetic and/or Crown Phase
_____ Protection Phase
_____ Total

Option 1:

Option 2:

*** additional charges may be incurred as treatment dictates
(e.g. root canal therapy or periodontal surgery)*

PAYMENT OPTIONS

<input type="checkbox"/>	Prepayment in full with a 5% discount.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dental Fee Plan <i>An affordable option at very reasonable rates</i> 0% Down: No Application Fee: No Initial Payment

Payment plans ranging from 18-60 months with low fixed interest rates of 9.99% to 12.99% depending on the term selected.

Prepayments to Dental Fee Plan can be made anytime without penalty.

WHAT CAUSES DULLING AND DISCOLOURATION OF TEETH?

Discolourations can be caused by staining, aging, or chemical damage to teeth. Tooth dullness or staining is an indication that whitening should be considered. Smokers and those who drink coffee and/or tea on a regular basis accelerate the discolouration and require cleaning more often. This is among the most common reasons for teeth whitening. Teeth whitening is usually the first solution to try due to its lower cost.

WHAT IS BONDING TYPICALLY USED FOR?

Bonding is a tooth-coloured composite resin (similar to an enamel) that is bonded to the tooth surface to repair and/or change the colour or shape of a tooth, then sculpted into shape, hardened, and polished. When teeth are chipped or slightly decayed, bonded composite resins may be the material of choice. Bonding also makes a great tooth coloured filling for small cavities and broken or chipped surfaces. It can also be used to close spaces between teeth. Additionally, it is used to cover the entire outside surface of a tooth to change its colour and shape.

WHAT CAN BE DONE FOR MISSING TEETH?

Bridges are designed to replace missing teeth. Not only do they fill the unsightly spaces left by lost teeth, but they also help support the teeth adjacent to, and directly opposite, the missing teeth. Often a dentist will recommend an Implant to fill in the space as well.

HOW CAN JAGGED TEETH BE CORRECTED?

In some instances, simple reshaping (contouring) of the front teeth, even without anesthesia, may produce a dramatic result to correct jagged, chipped or slightly uneven teeth. The cosmetic dentist simply utilizes sanding discs and creativity, to create a natural look with existing teeth.

I WAS TOLD THAT I HAVE A WEAK BITING SURFACE, WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Crowns are used when making cosmetic improvements to the teeth is the goal, and serve an additional purpose. A crown is placed over a tooth, replacing most of its enamel. It surrounds the tooth, giving it strength and providing a strong, durable biting surface.

WHAT ARE PORCELAIN AND CERAMIC INLAYS?

Porcelain inlays are considered durable, with a manufacturing process that enables a high degree of accuracy in placing the inlay. Porcelain inlays bind onto the tooth and increase the overall strength of the tooth. These inlays may cost more than other types of filling procedures. Ceramic inlays are used to repair somewhat damaged back teeth. They are made of very strong and durable industrial ceramics. Glued into place with special adhesives, they hold the damaged parts of the tooth together. These inlays are quiet durable, and look exactly like a tooth in every way. They are also significantly stronger than regular filling materials.

WHY IS ORTHODONTICS A SPECIALTY IN DENTISTRY?

Orthodontics is the specialty of dentistry that addresses occlusal problems, or the mouth's ability to close with the teeth in the proper position. Orthodontics brings the teeth, jaw bones, and facial profile into proper alignment.

I HAVE PORCELAIN LAMINATE VENEERS, WHY ARE THEY SO SPECIAL?

Many times, the demands of cosmetic changes in the mouth are too great for simple bonding. This is when porcelain laminate veneers may be used. Porcelain veneers (sometimes referred to as laminates) can change an entire smile. Porcelain laminate veneers are quick, painless, and dramatic. They can change shape, colour, size, and arrangement of teeth or any combination of these factors. They can be used as an alternative for orthodontic treatment. The best part about porcelain laminate veneers is that they can be placed in two visits.



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