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valley Health

magazine

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**WHEN YOUR LIFE
IS ON THE LINE:**
Level 1 Trauma

INSIDE

Skin Cancer

Are you putting yourself at risk?

Sleep Disorders

Getting the most Zzzs

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The #1 killer in the world

MENTAL HEALTH

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Assisted
Living

DENTAL

Improving your
Smile

Improving your SMILE

Tips on getting your pearly whites their brightest

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Modern dentistry can provide us with exceptional improvements to our existing teeth and smiles. If you have teeth that are worn, discolored, misshapen, misaligned or missing, you are a candidate for one or more of the many enhancements available from dentists specially trained to address these issues. People choose to explore improving their smiles for specific reasons.

- Some people have healthy teeth and desire to transform their smile to a dazzling appearance.
- Many people experience breakdown of old fillings and crowns and just want to have a comfortable and stable mouth
- Others have more advanced dental problems and wish to rebuild their teeth to full health and function.

Very fine dentistry today is capable of combining health and functional needs, to create a youthful, durable and beautiful smile. When you examine your personal dental goals, doesn't it make sense to seek out a dentist that is capable of providing the best and most natural result possible? Whether you want to subtly enhance your smile, or need more extensive treatment, very fine dentistry can help you look more attractive and confident.

Cosmetic versus Aesthetic Dentistry

Many patients are confused by the statement that a dentist practices "Cosmetic Dentistry."

Given the current knowledge of the dental profession, all dental treatments



should enhance our lives. No dentist should treat patients without the outcome of a more attractive tooth or teeth.

The dictionary definition for "cosmetic" indicates a superficial measure to make something appear better, more attractive, or more impressive. The approach to "Cosmetic Dentistry" has followed this definition closely providing superficial changes to teeth to improve appearance without regard to function and long-term stability. Modern dentistry has blended aesthetics with function to provide natural lasting beauty promoting long-term health.

The dictionary definition for "aesthetic" pertains to the sense of beautiful and the science of aesthetics characterized by a love of beauty. The term "aesthetic" carries with it the connotation of beauty taken to a higher art form. Unlike cosmetic procedures, "Aesthetic Dentistry" combines artistry with function to produce exquisite results

built to harmonize with the patients' overall biology.

Every dental restoration (for example a crown, veneer, implant, bridge or filling) can and should be made to achieve an aesthetic, natural-looking result, but it is also just as important that the restoration be able to stand up to the forces of your bite over time. Properly designed and crafted dentistry should bring to the patient not only a refined natural look, but also a more comfortable feel and function to the mouth. You should never have to "get used" to dentistry that is done well.

Your dentist should be concerned with much more than whiter and bigger smiles. Each of us is a unique individual, and in true artistic dentistry, there is no room for "one size or color fits all". Careful attention must be paid to your current speech patterns, the specific shapes of your existing teeth and how your upper and lower teeth interact when chewing. Issues of gradation of color,

translucency and reflectivity must also be examined; like an artist preparing a canvas for a painting. A trained eye and perfected skills are critical to very fine dentistry. There are many personal and technical insights required to develop an artistic plan for smile renewal.

Getting to know you

The best possible outcome for very fine dental treatment starts with your doctor taking the time to understand the unique desires for your ideal smile. Everyone has different concepts of beauty, and this applies to teeth as well. Each patient's treatment should be individualized and custom-designed to complement their facial structure, skin, eyes, and functional demands. Just as an architect must spend significant time with the client before designing a true "dream home", so too must you and your dentist determine your goals and dreams for your oral health before ever thinking of touching your teeth. Planning is an essential component of very fine dentistry. Confirm that your dentist has completed advanced training in aesthetics and function. This training is essential to determine the implications of your smile design and can guide you in making the right choices that fit your life plan. Ask to see examples of smiles that your doctor has completed, not examples from published catalogs.

Examining the scene

After initial discussion, the next step is a thorough and comprehensive examination. Keep in mind that nutrition, function (the bite), accidental injuries, disease, age, your genetic makeup and other factors affect the appearance of your current smile. Your dentist must seek to understand how the changes in your mouth have occurred, your current health status, and take into account the health circumstances you will be facing as you age. A good example is worn teeth. Your dentist must understand how your teeth came to be worn or your "new" teeth will most

likely suffer the same fate; or worse. Another consideration is the architecture and health of your supporting bone and your gum tissue. Veneers placed without creating beautiful, healthy gumlines cannot capture the natural beauty of healthy teeth. One of your dentist's main objectives must be to solve as many issues as possible in order to make sure your new smile is optimally healthy, comfortable and functional so it can last over the course of your lifetime.

Building a portrait

This is a good time for you and your dentist to look at images of your desired smile; remember communication is key. Patients should be welcome to bring favorite smiles from magazines or other sources. Images of your current smile should also be taken. This permits an initial discussion about what may be possible for you.

Image enhancement techniques can be used to offer a realistic vision of potential options. Once you and your dentist have developed a blueprint of possibilities and blended this with your personal desires, a portrait can be developed on your canvas of tooth form and function.

Developing a canvas

The dental team will then "take impressions" (make molds) of your mouth to record your mouth, jaws and joints as they relate to each other in both form and function. Once obtained, your doctor can then create an authentic representation of how your teeth work together on a jaw simulator. This three-dimensional duplication of your mouth can be used to modify the shape and contour of your existing teeth and actually determine what is possible for you. This approach permits the dentist to assess how the intended changes

will impact your occlusion or bite. It is well established that the function of your jaws directly determines what is possible for the form and structure of teeth. Any dentistry performed without regard to a stable, comfortable bite is at significant risk for failure and disappointment. Developing a canvas of possibilities permits the doctor to properly orchestrate and unify your functional individualized needs, and gives you a first opportunity to see how your smile might actually appear.

The artist's plan

Once your dentist has crafted a well thought out plan, he or she should then meet with you to verify if the canvas of care portrays the result you have envisioned. Together, you and the doctor will determine the course of therapy that would most appropriately achieve the well-conceived composition. No two individuals should have the same plan – contrary to reality TV's message – front tooth veneers are not the answer to everyone's dreams. What if you

GLOSSARY OF THE GRIN

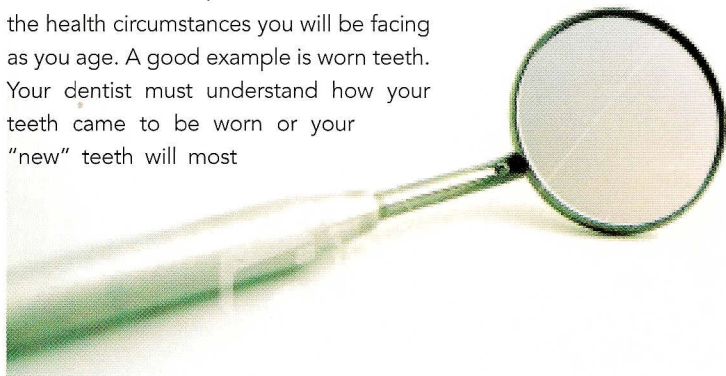
CROWN: The portion of a tooth that is covered by enamel. Also, a dental restoration that covers the entire tooth and restores it to its original shape.

VENEER: An artificial filling material, usually plastic, composite, or porcelain, that is used to provide an aesthetic covering over the visible surface of a tooth. Most often used on front teeth.

IMPLANT: An artificial device, usually made of a metal alloy or ceramic material, that is implanted within the jawbone as a means to attach an artificial crown, denture, or bridge.

FILLING: Material used to fill a cavity or replace part of a tooth.

FLEXIBLE BENEFITS PLAN: A type of benefits program that offers employees a menu of options, allowing them to create a benefits package which best suits their individual needs.





could obtain an extreme result with less work and expense. Would you be interested? Would you want choices? Would you want assurances that the restorations would hold up and not break over time?

Exquisite aesthetic dentistry is much more about communication, vision, testing and planning than it is about how fast it can be done. Creating a beautiful, lasting smile is similar to building a "dream" home. Each step in the process builds on the previous one. Shortcuts are the enemy. Art should never be rushed. First, your occlusion is akin to the foundation of a home; it should be afforded consideration if longevity and comfortable living are to be obtained. Next, the bone support and the gum tissue are the framing and walls; symmetry, texture, color of the gums "frame" the dentistry. Uneven gum lines can easily be corrected and enhanced to give the teeth pleasing and correct size and shape. Finally, the dental restorations can be prepared, resulting in a true "work of art" that lasts.

Exquisite provisionals

Beautiful and durable temporary restorations are possibly the most important part of a true aesthetic artistic

production. The temporary restorations are made to the pre-determined shape of the canvas composition, and integrated into your smile. This approach permits you to "test drive" the intended restorations to determine if they appear, function and feel as you had hoped. This gives you and your dentist an opportunity to refine the artistry, ensuring the optimal outcome you desire. Upon your approval of the artistic creation, final instructions are sent to the porcelain artist for fabrication of the refined dental restoration. The resulting final porcelain restorations will seem like identical twins to the exquisite provisionals you have already enjoyed. Taking the time to experience your teeth before the final fabrication results in the assurance of beauty and satisfaction.

Unveiling the art

All of the communication, vision, planning and testing result in the unveiling of the artistry created uniquely for you. The final refinements in shape and bite will be performed to insure that the results are harmonious and blend seamlessly into your smile. Your dentist will want to meet with you again to ensure that your new smile is solid and comfortable. Small refinements are easily made and will allow you to fully enjoy your work of art for many years. Each time you catch your smile in the mirror or in a photograph, you will feel that the process and outcome exceeded your expectations.

Our smiles are unique and cherished. They can enhance your self-esteem and confidence. Functionally correct aesthetic Dentistry can be a wonderful investment and gift, so when it comes to your teeth, you should leave cosmetics for the make-up counter, and consider Modern Dental Artistry as a way to enhance your smile. With the right artist at work, you're sure to enjoy several decades of pleasure and comfort. ■

SOME OF TODAY'S TOP COSMETIC DENTAL TREATMENTS

TEETH WHITENING

The number one requested cosmetic dental procedure, a variety of teeth whitening options are now available to patients in a wide range of prices. Dentist supervised treatments remain the AACD recommended procedure for lightening discolored teeth.

DIRECT BONDING

An option for chipped or cracked teeth, bonding is a process in which an enamel-like material is applied to a tooth's surface, sculpted into shape, hardened and then polished for an ideal smile.

IMPLANTS

Replacements for dentures, implants are a stronger, more attractive option for replacing missing or lost teeth. An anchor is placed in the patient's jaw, and a life-like ceramic restoration is built around it and matched to the original tooth color.

VENEERS

An increasingly popular procedure, veneers are ultra-thin, custom made laminates that are affixed directly to the teeth. They are a great option for closing gaps or disguising discolored teeth that do not respond to whitening procedures.

SOURCE: American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry

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 where you can find anything fresno. and we mean anything!

Photo by: Rita Hill