

## Cosmetic Dentistry

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While traditional dentistry focuses on oral hygiene and preventing, diagnosing and treating oral disease, cosmetic dentistry focuses on improving the appearance of a person's teeth, mouth and smile. In other words restorative, general and/or family dental practices address dental problems that require necessary treatment, whereas cosmetic dentistry provides elective &mdash; or desired &mdash; treatments or services. Cosmetic dentistry may also provide restorative benefits. For example, dental fillings are a common procedure used to treat decayed teeth. Previously, most dental fillings were composed primarily of gold, amalgam and other materials that left visible dark spots on the teeth. Today, dental fillings may fall into the category of cosmetic dentistry, because you can select fillings made of porcelain or composite materials that closely match the color of your teeth, thus maintaining the natural appearance of your teeth and smile. Many people may choose to have their older fillings replaced with newer, tooth-colored fillings to enhance their oral appearance. Cosmetic Dentistry Trends Technological advancements in natural-looking, tooth-colored dental materials make today's cosmetic dental treatments more durable and predictable than in years past. Additionally, dentists are now using more conservative cosmetic dentistry techniques to preserve as much of your natural tooth structure as possible, depending upon your specific clinical situation. Cosmetic dentists may also use such technologies as lasers in order to perform some procedures necessary for cosmetic treatments in their own offices &mdash; without the need for referrals to specialists. This makes cosmetic dental procedures such as smile makeovers more comfortable and convenient for patients, as well as helps to reduce recovery time. Cosmetic Dentistry Treatments Cosmetic dentistry treatments currently in use include: Inlays/Onlays: Also known as indirect fillings, inlays and onlays made from porcelain or composite materials are a long-lasting yet cosmetic way to provide a &ldquo;filling&rdquo; to teeth with tooth decay or similar structural damage. Whereas dental fillings are molded into place within the mouth during a dental visit, inlays and onlays are created in a dental laboratory before being fitted and adhesively bonded into place by your dentist. Composite Bonding: Chipped, broken, discolored or decayed teeth may be repaired or have their appearance corrected using a procedure called composite bonding. A dental composite material with the look of enamel and dentin is applied into the cavity or onto the surface of a tooth, where it is then sculpted into shape, contoured and hardened with a high-intensity light. The result is a restoration that blends invisibly with the remainder of the surrounding tooth structure and the rest of your natural teeth to create a healthy, bright smile. Demo video: [{youtube}vu8xSO24LMM&feature{/youtube}](#) Teeth Whitening: Teeth whitening is perhaps the most commonly recommended cosmetic dentistry procedure. Teeth are often stained from smoking, food, drink (coffee, tea or red wine) or poor oral hygiene. Bleaching the teeth can enhance the appearance of your smile. Demo video:

[{youtube}Od\\_H1qMF9I8{/youtube}](#)

Dental Veneers: Composite or porcelain laminates that are adhesively bonded to the surface of a tooth to correct and repair chips and cracks will improve a worn appearance or severe tooth discoloration. Veneers may also be recommended if you have gaps in your teeth or if you have not had success with teeth whitening.

Demo video: [{youtube}-jyv0wY6XkM{/youtube}](#) Dental Implants: Dental implants are artificial tooth root replacements that are used as a part of prosthetic (artificial replacement) dentistry in order to compensate for tooth loss. Often the result is not only an enhanced smile, but also a more youthful appearance, since missing teeth cause the face to collapse, making you look older.

Demo video: [{youtube}vO\\_IBtaH8P8{/youtube}](#) Smile Makeover: Smile makeovers involve a comprehensive assessment of your smile esthetics in order to improve its overall appearance. Typically one or more cosmetic dentistry procedures, such as dental veneers, dental implants, gingival sculpting and teeth whitening, will be required for several teeth in both the upper and lower arches in order to achieve the look you want. Full mouth reconstruction: While consulting with you about a smile makeover to primarily improve the esthetic appearance of your smile, your dentist may discover that there is a need to provide necessary treatment to correct functional problems with your bite, muscles, teeth and bone structure. If you need full mouth reconstruction, the materials available today make it possible for your dentist to provide you with durable, functional and clinically sound treatments that also look natural. Cosmetic dentistry offers many options for people who are unhappy with their smile. If you are one of these people, we encourage you to read our comprehensive cosmetic procedure articles to learn about the various treatments available to beautify your smile.

Sources:

Consumer Guide to Dentistry

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