

A REASON TO SMILE

If you're wishing you had the perfect smile, veneers are the best option. Here is everything you need know about these pearly whites.

BY BENJAMIN FISS, DDS

An extraordinary smile isn't something everyone is born with, though many of us dream that we had been. Today, veneers can take an ordinary smile to an extraordinary one. The process is fairly short, simple and pain-free.

Veneers are extremely strong, thin porcelain "shields" that are bonded onto the surfaces of your teeth. They have the ability to change an ordinary smile into an extraordinary smile. Porcelain veneers can close gaps and improve color as well as create the look and feel of instant orthodontics.

Once the veneers are bonded onto the surface of the teeth, they are able to recreate all of the depth of color and translucency that naturally occur in enamel. To create a natural look, as if the patient were born with the veneers, each veneer is individually seated and personalized to blend with the patient's facial features. In an older patient with a worn dentition, placing veneers can improve lip con-

tour and take years off of the patient's physical appearance.

The process begins by taking impressions of the patient's teeth. These impressions are sent to the lab where the lab technician is able to make a wax mold of the teeth to be veneered. This wax mold allows the lab technician to alter the models, making changes the patient is looking for.

The second visit usually involves administering anesthetic. Although veneers are very thin, there is a small amount of tooth reduction that is necessary to achieve the optimal result. An impression is then taken of the prepared teeth and sent to the lab for the veneers to be fabricated. A final color is selected for the future veneers and temporaries are placed over the teeth that have been worked on.

Approximately one week later, the patient returns. Anesthetic is once again administered. The temporary is lifted off and each ve-

neer is individually cemented. It is during this procedure that we customize the veneers to make them look natural until the ideal result is achieved.

Sometimes patients may feel post-operative temperature sensitivity. This sensitivity is normal and may last a few days. If a patient clenches or grinds their teeth, a night guard may be recommended to protect the existing teeth as well as the veneers. Caring for your porcelain veneers follows the same regimen as caring for your natural teeth. Anything that can break a natural tooth can fracture a veneer. The patient's oral hygiene remains the same, including flossing, brushing and regular professional cleanings. Given the proper care, veneers can preserve a smile for decades. ■

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