

That Beautiful Smile

by Scott F. Kenward, DMD

You have only one chance to make a good first impression, and your smile is a big part of that initial impact. Like it or not, your smile affects all aspects of your life: your own self-esteem, your relationship with family and friends, your career choices, your *image*.

A healthy and beautiful smile can improve your quality of life and even your job performance. If you're not happy with your smile, it can affect your confidence, your personality and, likewise, your whole life.

In many situations, there are conservative dental procedures that can improve the look of your smile and enhance your overall appearance. Let's examine what modern dentistry can do to give you *That Beautiful Smile*.

Porcelain Veneers

Ever wonder how those Hollywood movie stars get such dazzling smiles? Porcelain veneers are the answer.

Porcelain veneers are thin (0.5mm), hand-sculpted facings of super hard dental porcelain that bond directly to the front surfaces of the teeth. They are molded and shaped on a model made from an impression of the patient's mouth. Veneers are an ideal choice for improving your smile and have become increasingly popular due to their simplicity and versatility.

Veneers can be used to improve a wide variety of cosmetic dental problems. They can whiten stained or discolored teeth, close gaps between teeth, "correct" a crooked smile without the need for braces, repair chips and imperfections and create a more attractive or youthful looking smile.

When bonded to the teeth, the ultra-thin porcelain veneers are virtually undetectable and highly resistant to coffee, tea, or even tobacco stains. For strength and appearance, their resemblance to healthy, white tooth enamel is unsurpassed by other restorative options.

With proper care, porcelain veneers will brighten your smile for well over a decade.

Cosmetic Bonding

Cosmetic bonding is an alternative to veneers, and can be used as a restorative procedure for teeth that are chipped, cracked, discolored or misarranged.

The tooth is prepared for the procedure by lightly etching the surface and applying a bonding liquid. Once the liquid sets, a plastic resin is applied and sculpted into the desired shape by the dentist. Once set, the resin is trimmed, smoothed and polished to a natural appearance.

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Using resin instead of porcelain veneers for cosmetic dentistry saves time and money, however there are disadvantages with bonding. Since the plastic resin used is not as strong as porcelain or your natural tooth enamel, it is more likely to stain, chip or break during normal use. Resin can discolor over time, and does not have as much natural beauty as porcelain veneers.

Bonding typically lasts three to five years before need of repair.

Tooth Recontouring

Tooth shaping or *recontouring* is a process of changing the shape of teeth to improve their overall appearance. When teeth are slightly crowded or uneven or appear too long, small adjustments can be made to correct these flaws. Recontouring involves modifying the teeth by removing small amounts of enamel to create harmony and balance in the mouth.

The procedure is quick and painless (the enamel has no nerves), and is usually completed in just a few minutes. This treatment has limitations and can only be used for minor changes. Recontouring is often combined with bonding for more involved modifications of teeth.

Ask your dentist about which of these procedures can give you *That Beautiful Smile*.

Dr. Kenward is a dentist at 12651 South Dixie Highway in Pinecrest. His focus is on cosmetic and preventive dentistry. For more information call 305-255-7722.