

# Tooth Contouring- An Easy Way to a Beautiful Smile

By Dr. Melanie Rabeni

Tooth contouring is a quick and easy way for a patient to correct their chipped, overlapping or odd shaped teeth and improve their smile. The process can normally be done in a single office visit and will have a dramatic impact on how a person's entire mouth looks. Tooth contouring is also one of the few cosmetic procedures that can improve the look of your teeth almost instantly.

Even a small adjustment to the shape of a tooth through tooth contouring can correct for misaligned teeth and give you the smile you've always wanted. The process itself starts with a dental checkup to make sure the tooth that needs adjusting is healthy and that there are no other underlying problems with the patient's gums or teeth. This checkup will usually also include x-rays of the tooth being contoured to show the dentist where the nerve is located and how thick the enamel of the tooth is on the surface. These are critical pieces of information that will help the dentist understand how much contouring they can do to the tooth without causing damage. Some more modern offices may even use computer-imaging techniques to plot the tooth before contouring. This helps the dentist understand exactly what to adjust during the procedure. Pictures are usually taken of the patient's mouth as well to provide a record of before and after conditions. These can be helpful to the patient in understanding the changes made during the procedure. Some dentists will even use the original picture to show the patient what they can expect from the procedure through computer imagery. By using a computer to illustrate the pending changes, the dentist can ensure the patient is fully prepared for the outcome of the procedure.

Once the specifics of the tooth are determined, the cosmetic dentist will then use a small disc to gently and carefully remove some of the enamel of the tooth during reshaping. They will make minor adjustments to the edges and surfaces of the tooth to finally achieve the shape and size desired. The majority of the reshaping will be done with this dental handpiece and finer adjustments completed with a small file or abrasive strips. Constant measurements of the tooth and the patient's bite are done throughout the procedure to make sure the process is proceeding as planned. The dentist may also adjust the gap between the tooth being contoured and adjacent teeth to allow proper cleaning and flossing.

In addition to removing some of the surface of the tooth, tooth contouring can also involve the addition of colored laminate to build up a particular surface. This laminate is designed to perfectly match the color of the tooth being

contoured and is attached with dental adhesive. This extra layer of laminate allows the cosmetic dentist to make whatever adjustments are needed to a tooth to correct for alignment. These laminates are typically applied as a final step in the tooth contouring procedure and will last for a lifetime with proper dental care.

While tooth contouring can help to correct for many alignment issues with teeth, it is just one procedure that a skilled cosmetic dentist has at their disposal. If you think that tooth contouring can help improve your smile, talk to your dentist today to see if the procedure is right for you.

Dr. Melanie Rabeni owns Rabeni Dental in Plymouth, MA. For the latest information on how to create a beautiful smile through cosmetic dentistry, visit [www.rabenidental.com](http://www.rabenidental.com)

*This article may be freely reprinted or distributed in its entirety in any e-zine, newsletter, blog, or website. The author's name, bio and website links must remain intact and be included with every reproduction.*