

SMILE MAKEOVERS WITH PORCELAIN VENEERS

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In the past two articles, I discussed some of the tangible and intangible benefits of cosmetic dentistry. The smile, being the centerpiece of the facial expression, has a high value as it pertains to appearance, self-esteem, and the ability to communicate with confidence. Ultimately, an attractive smile can have

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life-changing implications. A better job, a promotion, the ideal mate, more sales, or simply the chance to laugh without being self-conscious can be included among the many benefits of a beautiful smile.

Years ago, Hollywood stars were known to have their teeth "capped" for cosmetic enhancement. "Caps," another name for crowns, are an aggressive procedure. Besides having to substantially reshape the teeth for those Hollywood "caps", the result was oftentimes not very natural in appearance. Some of the results were quite obviously artificial.

Today, the state-of-the-art cosmetic restoration is the porcelain veneer. Porcelain veneers have a number of advantages over the old ways of smile enhancement. Porcelain veneers, made with high-tech ceramic materials, can look so natural as to be indistinguishable

from natural teeth. Furthermore, they are a much more conservative procedure compared to crowns. Crowns require considerable reduction of natural tooth structure in every dimension. In contrast, porcelain veneers require minimal shaping of the front part of the teeth. Whereas crowns surround a substantially reduced tooth, a veneer is fingernail-like covering bonded to the front of a tooth.

Porcelain veneers may be a solution for a variety of cosmetic dental problems including: gaps, chipped teeth, worn teeth, crooked teeth, crowded teeth, or discolored teeth. In many cases, a smile challenged by any combination of the above can be changed to virtual perfection with two visits. A talented cosmetic dentist will design your new smile to fit in with your unique facial features. A smile makeover with porcelain veneers will be a customized result, which can be so natural it will defy detection.

There are few steps involved in porcelain veneer treatment. An initial smile design appointment will include molds for models of your existing teeth along with a series of photographs. The information gleaned from the photographs and models at this appointment will be used to plan the actual treatment. Once the plan has been agreed upon, the first treatment visit is scheduled. This visit will be a few hours long. It will begin with the conservative reshaping of the teeth in the smile zone to make room for the porcelain veneers. A mold is made of the reshaped teeth, which will be sent to a talented ceramist at a dental lab. Next, temporary veneer restorations are made. These temporaries serve two purposes. They cover and protect the teeth until the final veneers are placed. Secondly, and more importantly, they serve as a pre-



view of the final result. The temporary veneers will be made to create the desired result, with your approval, and then serve as the blueprint for the final veneers. About two weeks later, at the second treatment visit, the final veneers are placed. After the temporaries are removed, the final veneers are tried in to verify the fit and appearance. After your approval, the porcelain veneers are permanently bonded to the teeth with a special composite resin. Then they are polished creating a naturally attractive smile. Once porcelain veneers are bonded to the teeth, they form a very strong restoration that rivals natural enamel. Your new smile should last many years with good home care and regular professional maintenance. To see photographs of actual cases, you can visit our website at: www.palmbeach-smiles.com. ♦

Palm Beach Smiles is located at Boynton Beach Blvd., and I-95. You can contact us at: 736-2377.