



Your dentist has many different techniques to shape, sculpt, and make your smile more beautiful. With a few simple steps, you can have a smile you feel great about. And treatment may be more affordable than you think.

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Dental Treatment



# Smile Makeover

**W213**

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Dentists can fix teeth that are discolored, crooked, unevenly spaced, too long or too short, or worn down. Here are some popular treatment options:

- **Tooth-Colored Fillings**

Your dentist can restore teeth that have cavities with natural-looking composites, such as resins, or use porcelain inlays, onlays and crowns. Your dentist can select materials that match the color of your teeth.

- **Tooth Whitening**

Teeth become stained for many reasons — drinking coffee, tea or wine; smoking; and even aging can discolor teeth. Tooth whitening is a process that makes discolored teeth whiter. The bleach used for in-office (chairside) whitening is stronger than the bleach found in at-home whitening kits. Your dentist can recommend the whitening treatment that is right for you.

- **Orthodontics**

Orthodontics are used to treat a malocclusion (“bad bite”), to straighten teeth, and to correct jaw alignment.

You may be familiar with traditional braces. Usually made of metal, these braces can now be only as noticeable as you want. Brackets, the part of the braces that attach to each tooth, are smaller and can sometimes be attached to the back of the tooth to make them less noticeable. Brackets can be made of metal, ceramic, plastic, or a combination of these materials. Some brackets are clear or tooth colored.

Another type of orthodontic treatment uses a series of clear, removable aligners to move your teeth over time. These aligners are more discreet than traditional braces. Prices and the length of treatment are different depending on what you choose. Aligners are not suitable for every patient; talk to your dentist about the right choice for you.

- **Crown Lengthening**

Sometimes the gums extend onto the front surfaces of the teeth. This can cause a “gummy” smile or make teeth look small. Crown lengthening is when your dentist removes a small amount of gum tissue and possibly a small amount of supporting bone around the teeth to make them look longer.

- **Enamel Shaping**

Your dentist can “reshape” your teeth by contouring tooth enamel, the outer layer of the tooth. When teeth are a little crowded or uneven, or when teeth appear too long, your dentist can use enamel shaping to improve how the teeth look.

- **Veneers**

Veneers are thin, tooth-colored shells that are bonded, or cemented, to the front of your teeth. They are custom-made of ceramic or composite resin, and look like natural teeth. Veneers can be used to fill spaces between teeth and to cover teeth that are stained, poorly shaped, or a bit crooked.

Teeth must usually be prepared before veneers are placed. It is often necessary to remove a small amount of your natural tooth to make space for the veneer. Once teeth are prepared, the procedure is permanent.

**Now is your chance to get the smile of your dreams. Talk to your dentist if you:**

- **Hide your smile and do not let others see your teeth and gums.**
- **Worry your teeth will become worse with age.**
- **Avoid treatment because of the cost or inconvenience.**

## First Steps to a New Smile

Once you decide to improve your smile, the first step is to visit your dentist. At this visit, you will talk about the best plan for you. If you have any signs of dental disease, your dentist may recommend treatment for these. It’s important to have a healthy mouth before starting cosmetic treatment.

This dental visit is the time to ask questions, such as:

**What are my choices?**

As you see, there are many procedures for improving your smile. Your dentist can make a treatment plan that is right for your needs.

**What are my expectations?**

It is important to have realistic expectations about your new smile. Complex cases may take more time and more visits. You and your dentist should both agree on the expected results of your new smile.

**How much time will it take?**

Some procedures take only one office visit. Others may take a few office visits. Your dentist can tell you how long your treatment will take.

**How can I get ready?**

Your dentist can tell you what to expect during your treatment. You may want to ask if your treatment will require anesthesia and how you can prepare for it.

**How much will this cost?**

It is important to talk about treatment costs with your dental practice before the procedure. Many practices offer payment plans and can help you use your dental benefits plan effectively. Most dentists accept credit cards, or can direct you to an outside health care financing company to help you pay for your treatment. In the end, however, the patient is fully responsible for payment and the correct use of dental benefit plans. Ask your benefits provider whether cosmetic treatments are covered.



**How will my new smile look?**

Your dentist may show you before and after pictures of patients who have received the same treatment that you are thinking about. Your dentist may also have computer imaging software or false “stand in” teeth that can be placed in your mouth temporarily to show you how your new smile will look.

**How do I care for my new smile?**

With your new smile come new responsibilities. Your dentist will give a detailed plan for the care of your new smile, but you may also have a few questions. Will there be follow-up or maintenance appointments? Are there special instructions during recovery? Will the dental work need to be replaced eventually?

## Show Off That Smile

**A radiant new smile can boost confidence and self esteem. According to the Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry, 99.7% of adults believe a smile is an important social asset. What are you waiting for? Talk to your dentist today about how to make your smile the best it can be.**

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