



by Dr. Tappan

Extreme Smile Makeovers with Veneers

Have you ever noticed a really attractive person from afar? The closer you get to them and see their teeth, you often realize that they were not quite as attractive as you imagined. Do you ever notice people speaking or laughing while hiding or covering their teeth? Maybe you realized immediately that all this person needs is a beautiful smile to complete the overall package. Maybe that person is you!

A beautiful smile is such an important part of our daily social interaction with other people—and how we feel about ourselves. When we can freely smile a beautiful smile, we automatically feel more positive and confident. A beautiful smile can also enhance our opportunities, both professionally and personally, as well as give you a more youthful appearance. If you can't smile with boldness and confidence it can be a serious impediment.

With just a few easy visits to the dentist, a beautiful smile can be achieved by placing porcelain veneers on your teeth. Porcelain veneers are used to correct gaps, chips, cracks, discolorations, and a variety of other cosmetic concerns that may make a person's smile less attractive. Veneers can also be used to restore worn, misaligned, stained, or misshaped teeth.

What are porcelain veneers?

Porcelain veneers, also called laminates, are made of a thin, tooth-colored shell of layered porcelain. The veneer is custom fitted to the front side of the tooth and cemented with a special adhesive. Because of the light transmitting properties of the porcelain, the veneers achieve a natural, life-like appearance for the treated teeth. Veneers are usually placed in sets on the upper and/or lower 6 front teeth.

What is the process and how long does it take?

The process starts with an analysis and proper cleaning of the existing teeth. Once good oral health has been established, the patient and the dentist will determine what color, shape, and size the veneers will be to reach the desired outcome. If the teeth are too dark to start with, they may need to be whitened. If too much gum tissue shows when the patient smiles, it may need to be trimmed back slightly, exposing more tooth structure. A vision of where the teeth will end up before starting assures a very predictable result.

The next visit involves removing a

small layer of enamel from the patient's natural tooth. This process makes room for the veneer and prevents the veneer from looking bulky. During that same appointment, an impression is taken of the prepared teeth, which is sent to a dental laboratory where the veneer(s) are custom made to fit each individual tooth. A set of temporary veneers is made for you to wear during the 2-3 week lab process. At the next visit the temporaries are removed and the permanent veneers are cemented in place. This complete process usually takes 3 to 4 visits over a 2 to 4 week time period.

Are there alternatives to porcelain veneers?

An alternative to porcelain veneers is dental bonding. By bonding a plastic, tooth-colored resin material to the front of the teeth, chips, gaps, color, shape and size can be altered. However, the problem with bonding is that it does not last very long and it stains over a period of time. The bonding should be replaced every 4 to 7 years and it can chip and fracture.



Another alternative to veneers is orthodontic tooth movement. By moving the teeth with braces, the teeth can be placed into better position and a much better appearance can be achieved. In some cases this a great alternative. However, it can take anywhere from 18 months to 3 years. And, braces cannot change the color, shape or size of the teeth, only the position.

How do you maintain porcelain veneers and how much do they cost?

To maintain porcelain veneers, good oral hygiene must be practiced at all times. Regular visits to the den-

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tist along with daily brushing and flossing are required. Patients who clench or grind their teeth have to take special precautions and some may need mouth guards to protect their veneers. Biting your fingernails, ice, candy, or other hard objects should always be avoided. The cost of veneers can vary anywhere from \$900 to \$1,500 per tooth.



Porcelain veneers are a perfect solution to improve your smile while restoring your confidence and self-esteem. By correcting embarrassing chipped, gapped, or misaligned teeth, a beautiful smile can be achieved in as little as 2 to 3 weeks. Veneers can rejuvenate dark, stained, or worn teeth, making your smile more youthful and radiant. With porcelain veneers, you can create the warm, beautiful smile that you've always wanted.

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