

## GOING HOLLYWOOD!

If you've ever wondered why so many actors, models, celebs, and media personalities all seem to have such perfect teeth, you should familiarize yourself with "dental veneers." Also referred to as "Hollywood teeth," dental veneers are wafer-thin, custom-made shells of [tooth](#)-colored materials (porcelain or resin) that are designed to cover the front surface of teeth. After removing about a half-millimeter of enamel from the tooth surface, the dentist bonds these thin shells to the front of the teeth, effectively changing their color, shape, size, and/or length. Dental veneers are available to anyone looking to improve the aesthetics of his or her smile. They are also routinely used to fix chipped, broken, worn, irregularly shaped, misaligned, and uneven teeth.

P.S. Dental veneers are sometimes used as an alternative to orthodontic treatment when patients want to fill the gaps between front teeth that otherwise detract from their smiles.

## WEAK LINK

According to a recent study, dentures have been linked with weaker muscles and joints. Researchers made their findings after analyzing the health of 1,800 Americans aged 50 years and older. While the researchers who conducted the study are not entirely sure why this association exists, they believe that denture wearers may tend to avoid foods that provide the nutrients needed to produce strong muscles and joints. Of course, dentures provide a cost-effective remedy for missing teeth, but their bite force is considerably less than that of natural teeth. In order to derive the maximum benefit from wearing dentures, patients should be sure to schedule regular checkups that alleviate any fitting problems and discomfort that might make them avoid nutrient-rich foods.

P.S. Although they are a more expensive tooth-replacement alternative to dentures, tooth implants provide the most natural remedy in terms of both aesthetics and function.

## GETTING TEETH INTO BETTER SHAPE

One of the most conservative cosmetic dentistry treatments dentists use today is also one of the quickest, most effective, and least costly. “Enameloplasty,” which also goes by the name “dental recontouring,” involves the precise removal of a small amount of tooth enamel in order to make a smile more pleasing or more balanced. The procedure involves the use of a drill with a small diamond-tipped bit, or even sandpaper, to shave away a slight amount of enamel. The best candidates for tooth recontouring are patients with overlapping, elongated, or overly pointed teeth (in particular, the canine teeth). Enameloplasty does not require anesthesia because it does not affect the tooth pulp or nerves in any way.

P.S. Once a tooth has been filed down to its new shape with enameloplasty, it is polished.

## GUM DISEASE AND STROKES

Two recent studies found that, although having gum disease significantly raises the risk of stroke, regular dental care may lower that risk. The two studies, which (combined) reviewed the medical records of over 17,000 individuals with gum disease over a period of fifteen years, found periodontal disease to be independently associated with a significantly higher risk of stroke. In light of this sobering finding, it is heartening to note that regular dental exams, cleanings, and treatment were associated with a 23 percent lower risk of stroke. With this in mind, there are very good reasons to see the dentist twice a year and brush and floss teeth at least twice a day at home.

P.S. U.S. adults between the ages of 50 and 64 experience the highest rates of periodontal disease (11.88 percent).