

Smile Makeover

A smile makeover is the process of improving one's smile through one or more [cosmetic dentistry](#) procedures such as [teeth whitening](#), [veneers](#), white fillings, [Lumineers](#), crowns, dental caps, or bridges. A smile makeover will restore chipped, cracked, or discolored teeth, restore your bite, and return the muscles that control your jaw movement to their natural position.

The goal of a smile makeover is to improve your smile by taking into consideration your facial appearance, skin tone, hair color, teeth, gum tissue and lips to develop your ideal smile. Smile makeovers are customized according to your unique considerations and you and your cosmetic dentist will discuss what you want your smile to look like as well the things that you currently don't like about your smile. Tooth decay, staining, discolored teeth and slight shifting are all inevitable causes that are unfortunate but can generally be remedied in a few short visits.

What Can a Smile Makeover Remedy?

A smile makeover is a comprehensive cosmetic dentistry process of improving the appearance of the smile and is essentially something that you chose to have performed.

Usually the question you will be posed with is "what don't you like about your smile?" Discussing these aspects will give your dentist a clear idea of what they can do to improve including some of the following:

Tooth Color: If you suffer from discolored teeth as a result of aging, your food or drink diet, or various other yellowing factors, a smile makeover can restore your teeth's appearance. Teeth whitening can improve the color of stained teeth or if more specialized treatments are needed you may be a candidate for [porcelain veneers](#), [Lumineers](#), crowns, or [dental implants](#).

Alignment: Teeth that are misaligned can be straightened and properly aligned through orthodontics like [Invisalign](#) or may be improved with veneers.

Spacing: Teeth that have gaps between them may be aligned properly through a variety of [cosmetic dentistry](#) solutions.

Missing Teeth: Missing teeth are unsightly hindrances that affect the appearance of your smile. They can be replaced with [dental implants](#) or bridges.

Chipped, Cracked, or Uneven Teeth: Teeth that are chipped, cracked, or uneven can be cosmetically bonded with veneers or [Lumineers](#) to improve appearance.

Unshapely Face: Through the use of modern technologies, an unshapely or aging face can be improved or rejuvenated with certain cosmetic dentistry procedures for fuller lips, cheeks and smile.

Tooth Length: The effects of aging and every day wear and tear can detract from a youthful appearance. A smile makeover treatment for shorter teeth may include the reshaping and lengthening of the two front central teeth with composite bonding or porcelain veneers.

Tooth Proportions: A balanced smile gives the appearance of proper proportion and good oral health. Your dentist will work with you to design a treatment plan that enhances your teeth's esthetics and gives you a beautifully balanced smile line.

Smile Makeover Treatment

Before your smile makeover plan is developed your cosmetic dentist must first evaluate the condition of your oral health. There is no one set of rules for a smile makeover, they are highly involved procedures and must be customized to individual circumstances. Your cosmetic dentist will evaluate your teeth, gums, underlying support structure and bite (occlusion) to determine candidacy for a smile makeover. If you have any previous oral health problems they will need to be addressed prior to your smile makeover treatment.

Many cosmetic dentists are utilizing [advancements in technology](#) to give patients previews of what they can expect from their smile makeover. There are imaging software technologies available that can give the patient an idea of what they might look like when the makeover is complete. In addition to computer software it is recommended that you request before and after photos of previous recipients of smile makeovers so you can get a good idea of the type of work your cosmetic dentist performs.

Smile Makeover Cost

The cost of a smile makeover will vary depending on the type of treatment necessary to fulfill your goals. As they are custom to each individual recipient, your cosmetic dentist can give you an idea of what it may cost after performing an extensive evaluation of your smile. Any problematic oral health issues that need to be addressed before the smile makeover may lead to increased costs, although they will be necessary in a successful procedure. Your dental insurance provider may be able to cover some of the costs associated with restorative dental procedures so you should always consult with them before entering into treatment.

Veneers: Information, Procedure, & Cost

Dental veneers are custom-made ultra-thin shells of tooth colored materials designed to cover the front surface of teeth to improve your appearance. The veneers are bonded adhesively to the front of the tooth to fix the look of teeth that are chipped, discolored, misaligned, uneven, worn down, or abnormally spaced. Veneers are a cosmetic dentistry procedure that creates a bright, white smile with beautifully aligned, shapely teeth. Veneers are constructed of porcelain or from resin composite materials. Porcelain veneers are thought to be more natural looking as they better mimic the light reflecting properties of natural teeth and are known for their abilities to resist stains. Your cosmetic dentist will be able to help you decide which choice is right for your particular needs.

What Dental Problems can Veneers Solve?

Dental veneers can make most issues concerning unattractive teeth better, including worn enamel, wear and tear, genetics, and uneven teeth. Over time the protective layer that covers our teeth called enamel becomes worn down, gets duller, and becomes discolored. This is often the result of genetics but may also be attributed to diet and the food and drinks that stain our teeth. The natural wear of teeth occurs as we get older and results in a less esthetically pleasing appearance. Our teeth are more prone to chipping and cracking, and veneers may be recommended to remedy this occurrence.

Additionally, veneers have been known to provide benefits to the following:

- Crooked teeth
- Chipped teeth
- Cracked teeth
- Spaced teeth
- Discolored teeth
- Misshapen teeth
- A braces alternative

In addition to being utilized as a cosmetic dentistry procedure, veneers can also serve a functional purpose by protecting the surface of a damaged tooth. Often time's dental veneers can eliminate the need for more invasive tooth preparation, such as the need for a dental crown. The thin nature of veneers requires little to no tooth reshaping to bond them to the tooth.

Dental Veneers Procedure

A dental veneer procedure usually takes three trips to the dentist- the first for the initial consultation and two to make and install the veneers. One tooth or many teeth can simultaneously undergo the application process as described below. Dental offices typically offer amenities for those undergoing procedures that take elongated periods of time such as the ability to watch TV, listen to music, or relax.

Initial Consultation- The initial consultation is between you and your dentist to discuss the result that you wish to achieve. Your dentist will perform a full examination and evaluation of your teeth to make sure dental veneers are appropriate for you and discuss what the procedure will involve and some of its limitations. Your dentist may also take x-rays and make impressions of your mouth and teeth.

Preparation- On your next visit to your dentist, he/she will remove about 1/2 millimeter of enamel from the tooth surface, which is an amount nearly equal to the thickness of the veneer to be added to the tooth surface. A use of a local anesthetic may be used to numb the area before the enamel is trimmed off. Then your dentist will make a model or impression of your tooth to send out to a dental laboratory which will be constructing your veneer. This process usually takes 1 to 2 weeks for your dentist to receive the veneers back from the laboratory.

Application- On your third and final visit, your dentist will temporarily place the veneer on your tooth to examine its fit and color before it is permanently attached. To achieve the proper fit, your dentist will repeatedly remove and trim the veneer as needed. Before the veneer is bonded to your tooth, your tooth will be cleaned, polished, and roughened to allow for a strong bonding process. To properly affix the veneer to your tooth, the dentist will apply a special light beam to the veneer which activates chemicals in the bonding cement that cause it to cure very quickly. Finally all excess bonding cement is removed, your bite is evaluated and any final adjustments are made to the veneer as necessary. You will probably be asked to return for a follow-up visit to ensure the veneer placement has been successful and to check how your gums are responding to the presence of your veneer(s).

Pros and Cons of Dental Veneers

Dental Veneers offer the following advantages:

- Provide a natural looking appearance
- Gum tissue tolerates porcelain well
- Porcelain veneers are stain resistant
- Veneers don't require extensive shaping procedures
- The color of veneers can improve upon that of dark teeth

The disadvantages to dental veneers:

- Veneers are permanent
- Veneers cost more than composite resin bonding
- Veneers may not be repairable should they become damaged
- They may temporarily cause your teeth to become more sensitive because of the removal of enamel

Cost of Dental Veneers

There are many factors associated with the cost of dental veneers including who your dentist is, where you live, the extent of your procedure, and the materials used. Generally, veneers can range in cost from \$500 to \$1,300 per tooth. Some dental insurance companies may cover some of the costs associated with veneers however this is not common because veneers are generally considered a **cosmetic dentistry procedure**. Check with your dental care provider to see if they will help with the cost of your dental veneers.

Other factors that influence the cost of dental veneers include:

- The artistic and technical skill of the ceramist making the veneers.
- The material used, whether porcelain or resin composite.
- The number of teeth involved in the procedure.
- Any additional restorative or cosmetic dentistry procedures necessary to prepare for veneers such as **teeth whitening**, or tooth reshaping.

Veneer Alternatives

There are **alternatives to dental veneers** and you can discuss these with your dentist to determine which ones may or may not be appropriate to you. The choices include **bonding** and crowns and Invisalign.

Dental Bonding- Dental bonding is applying a tooth-colored resin to the tooth to restore it from the effects of wear and tear, aging, decay, spacing, and more. The process is similar to that of veneers however there are no veneers applied, the resin itself is used to shape the tooth to its desired profile.

Dental Crown- Dental crowns are a tooth-shaped "cap" that is placed over a tooth to restore its shape and size, and to improve its appearance. They are cemented into place, and are typically permanent restorations of teeth.