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PORCELAIN VENEERS

How To Get That WOW Smile

By Dr. Dan Hagi DDS, FAGD, FICOI



The goal of aesthetic dentistry is to perfect the smile. Porcelain veneers are wafer thin pieces of porcelain that can be used to rebuild a smile and reinvigorate self esteem. The treatment itself has been popular for many years and its results can be seen on nearly every magazine cover. Although we're all familiar with what veneers are in a general sense, it appears that little has been done to educate members of the general public about the process. In this article I would like to take the opportunity to demystify the process, illuminate some potential pitfalls, and demonstrate successful results.



Illustration 1: Pre-operative image of smile. Note the discoloration of the teeth and the spot staining. The patient wants a more refined look.

The first steps in any veneer case are proper diagnosis, imaging, and visualization. The wax-up or mock-up is our tool in envisioning the final result. Veneers can solve a variety of aesthetic issues including stained or discolored teeth, spaced teeth and minor rotations.

Once the case has been planned and the end-result visualized, the patient's teeth are prepared for the application of the porcelain.

This preparation differs from patient to patient. At times the preparation is very minimal, and in some cases the requirements call for more drastic changes in color and shape and the preparation of the teeth differs.



Illustration 2: Conservative tooth preparation. The preparation of the tooth is limited to enamel in this case.

After the teeth are prepared the provisional restorations are made, these provisionals are a test drive of the final product. No other form of aesthetic surgery or treatment allows the patient to test drive the result before it is finalized. The patient may wear the provisional veneers until they are satisfied that the fit, form and contours of the veneers are up to par.



Illustration 3: Provisional restorations produced from wax-up. These have the contour of the desired veneers, but lack the surface texture and final flare.

Once the provisionals are approved, the production of the porcelain begins. The artistry is monumental as we are trying to mimic nature and produce the most realistic results. When attention is not paid to this final step, veneers may end up looking artificial and not lifelike. Our ceramists are skilled at mimicking nature and building the teeth to the specifications dictated by the provisionals and the doctor's artistry.



Illustration 4: Veneers being fabricated on the dental models. Note the surface textures, colour and detail.



Illustration 5: Unnatural looking veneers that are over contoured and artificial looking.

The final veneers are then bonded (attached) to the teeth using dental adhesives. This step is crucial as well as a strong bond between the porcelain and the tooth will ensure a long lasting restoration. Below are examples of completed smiles.



Illustration 6: Before and after of very natural-looking porcelain veneers.



Illustration 7: Before and after pictures of case from Illustration 1. Note the naturalness of the smile.



The aim of the treatment is to create a smile that looks completely natural. It is true to say that great aesthetic dentistry often goes unnoticed.



Illustration 8: Beautiful teeth.... or are they veneers?

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