

SINGAPORE TATLER

men mode

autumn/winter 2008

\$10 (INCL: GST)



GRANDE COMPLICATIONS

9 dazzling
tourbillons
to covet

WHALE OF A TIME

go on vacation,
save the planet

SEXY COUPÉS

sinuous forms,
prodigious power

RENAISSANCE MAN

Frank Cintamani
is MenMode's
Man of the Year 2008

For minor imperfections like tiny chips and uneven teeth length, you can try tooth re-contouring, which should also improve your overall dental health. It narrows teeth gaps and overlaps; places where tartar or plaque tends to build up.

An estimated one-third of the population suffers from gum problems. If left unchecked, they can lead to unsightly diseases like gingivitis and periodontitis. This is where general gum surgery comes to the fore. But if you have trouble with receding gums, another technique, gum grafting, may help to put the smile back on your face.

When a receding gum line is left untreated, periodontal disease and bone loss set it and threaten the foundation of a smile. The exposed tooth roots are also very sensitive to hot and cold foods, making them prone to developing cavities.

A WINNING SMILE

Owning a beautiful smile is the secret behind instant braces. Previously, you had to grin and bear the self-conscious braces for two years or more. At Smile Inc., Dr Rex Tan has introduced this procedure that requires just two 80-minute visits. Say goodbye to retainers and messy wire brackets forever.

"Basically, I reshape and re-contour the teeth," Dr Tan explains. "What we're doing is reversing the effects of ageing, turning back the clock, and returning patients their smiles back to 25 years before." In a similar vein is the Smile Lift, which involves lifting the smile from the side or the corners of the mouth so that the lower half of the face gives a fuller smile.



six tips to pearly whites

- > Always brush after meals.
- > Use a soft toothbrush.
- > Don't over-brush. Toothbrush abrasion can occur and if you are not gentle, your gums may recede.
- > Use an electric toothbrush with sonic energy. It gets the plaque and stains off very well.
- > Floss regularly.
- > Control your lifestyle: less coffee, tea, tobacco and red wine. But if you choose to indulge, brush your teeth immediately so that the stain doesn't set in.

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But these treatments don't come cheap and may cost more than \$100,000 for a full mouth reconstruction with implants and bone grafting. But patients like 35-year-old sales manager Lisa Lim feels it's worth every penny. First, she had to wear braces to straighten her teeth. When that didn't work out because her teeth were still growing outwards, she was advised to undergo jaw surgical correction.

"I have no regrets!" Lim asserts, adding that the total bill costs more than \$9,000. "It was very painful but friends now say I look younger."

Before you make an appointment to get that winning smile, Dr Chong advises, "The dentist should be experienced and have a good eye for cosmetics. His support team should be caring and professional and good laboratory support is essential in achieving the best cosmetic results. Facilities for sedation should be available, if required, for patients who are anxious or if they're having complex procedures." ■



the perfect smile

Dental care has gone beyond straightening teeth and keeping your gums happy. The buzzword today in dentistry is aesthetic

BY FELIX CHONG PICTURES GETTY IMAGES, WWW.SEC.HK

Open your mouth and say "Ah...beautiful". That's what you'll probably hear on the dentist's chair these days. It's no longer about extracting that stubborn, wayward wisdom tooth or fitting bridges and crowns. Call it the dental equivalent of the successful TV series *Extreme Makeover* but the buzzword in dentistry is aesthetic.

"People are more conscious of their appearance nowadays," observes Dr Ernest Rex Tan, co-founder and director of Smile Inc. Dental Surgeons. High-fliers like bankers, CEOs and high-society people are making a beeline for cosmetic dentists. "Appearance has become a commodity," says Dr Tan. "When you look good, your self-esteem is also elevated."

But before you pick up the phone to make an appointment, Dr William Chong, who is a lecturer in implant dentistry and runs integrated healthcare provider Pacific Healthcare Holdings, advises that patients need an overall consultation to express their concerns for the dentist to understand their needs. They should also look for a comprehensive plan that explains the treatment options."

According to Dr T J Tan, who set up Scotts Dental Centre with Dr Siow Wern Shi, cosmetic dentistry covers three broad categories.

WHITE MAGIC

The first, and often seen as an entry-level treatment, is tooth whitening, a highly effective method of lightening stains without chipping off any tooth surface. Prices range between \$180 to \$450 for a take-home bleaching gel, in which you wear a bleaching tray for one to four hours daily. The sparkle will set in after five days.

If you want more immediate results because you need to attend an important social event, you can opt for a higher-end treatment, which takes between one to two hours and costs anywhere between \$1,200 to \$1,500. This involves the dentist applying a gel to your teeth and the bleaching agent is later activated using plasma arc light. Basically, the plasma light source activates the peroxide to oxidise stains on the tooth surface. The more expensive alternative is laser whitening, touted as the gold standard in the field and boasts up to a maximum of 15 shades whiter. But this procedure can set you back by \$1,500 and more.

COVER UP

Fans of TV series *Extreme Makeover* and *America's Next Top Model* would be familiar with veneers that dentists use to give patients winning looks and smiles. They are the next most popular treatment in Singapore, and are essentially custom-made shells designed to cover the front surface of teeth, especially when they're discoloured, chipped, broken, misaligned or irregularly shaped. To achieve this, high-tech machines have also moved into the act, using CEREC (Chairside, Economical Restoration of Esthetic Ceramic). The technology uses the proven technologies of CAD/CAM (Computer Aided Design/Computer Aided Manufacturing) to incorporate a camera, computer and milling machine into one instrument. The doctor will use a special camera to take a picture of your damaged tooth, so there's no need for uncomfortable moulds or temporaries. The picture is transferred to a colour computer screen where CAD technology takes over the design and CAM technology automatically creates the mould. Finally, the doctor will bond the custom designed piece to the surface of your old tooth. Done in just one sitting, CEREC restorations use strong, tooth-coloured ceramic materials, similar to the composition of natural tooth structure to restore teeth to their natural look.



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