



apples
+sense
INSPIRING HEALTH
Comprehensive medical centre

**COSMETIC DENTAL
TREATMENT**

Cosmetic Dental Treatment

Q. What is cosmetic/aesthetic dentistry?

A. Dentistry is no longer just a case of filling and taking out teeth. Nowadays, many people turn to cosmetic or 'aesthetic' dentistry, as a way of improving their facial and overall appearance. The treatments available can be used to straighten, lighten, reshape and repair teeth. Cosmetic treatments include, but are not limited to veneers, crowns, bridges, tooth-coloured fillings, implants and tooth whitening and tooth straightening. Quite often more than one of the above treatment is required to achieve the final results.

Q. What is a veneer?

A. Veneers are very thin slices of porcelain/enamel-like material. They are precisely made to fit over the visible surface of your front teeth, similar to how a false finger nail fits over a nail.

Q. Why might I have a veneer?

A. Veneers are an ideal way of treating discoloured or unsightly teeth, closing gaps between front teeth, or repairing chips and cracks.

Q. How are veneers fitted?

A. A small amount of enamel is removed from the tooth, usually the same thickness as the veneer will be. The dental team take an impression and send it to a dental technician, who makes the veneer in a laboratory, so the correct shade and appearance. The veneer is then bonded to the tooth to form a strong and natural-looking finish.

Q. What is a crown?

A. Sometimes, when a tooth is heavily broken or heavily filled, the dentist may need to crown or 'cap' it to restore its appearance and more importantly, its strength. The crown is a full covering over the tooth to protect it.

Q. How does a dentist make a crown?

A. The usual procedure for fitting a crown involves shaping the tooth under local anaesthetic (numbing) and then taking a mould of the prepared tooth using a rubber-like material.

A mould of the opposing jaw and a record of how the teeth bite together are also taken.

The moulds are then sent to the laboratory along with the details of the shade to be used, and the technician makes the crown to the correct shape and appearance.

Q. What happens to my tooth while the crown is being made?

A. While your crown is being made, the prepared tooth can be protected with a temporary crown. It is usually in place for about ten days to two weeks. This is easily removed at the appointment of fitting the permanent crown.

Q. How is the crown fitted?

A. The permanent crown is cemented (fixed) onto your tooth after checking the fit and appearance is fine.

Sometimes, the bite then needs to be adjusted, and this is usually done after the crown is fitted. As the crown is made in a laboratory (outside the mouth) from a model of the teeth, there are sometimes occasions where it does not fit the tooth well and may require a slight adjustment of the preparation of the tooth and a new mould to be taken for a remake of the crown.

Q. What is the crown made of?

A. Crowns can be made of a variety of different materials, such as non precious metal, gold, porcelain or porcelain bonded to metal/gold. New and more aesthetic materials such as all ceramic and glass are also now available and are more aesthetic, but still with good strength. It is a good idea to talk to your dental team about which crown would be best for you.

Q. How can my dental team fill a gap in my mouth?

A. If a tooth is missing, or needs taking out, there are several ways to fill the gap that is left. In some cases, it is important to try and replace any missing teeth to balance the way your jaw bites. If you have several missing teeth, the remaining teeth are under more pressure. This can lead to broken fillings and even jaw problems.

The simplest way of replacing a missing teeth is with a partial denture.

However, some people find dentures uncomfortable and decide to look at alternatives, such as bridges or implants.

Q. What is a partial denture?

A. This is a removeable plate (it can be taken out and put back in) with one or more false teeth on it. It may be all plastic or a mixture of plastic and metal.

Both types can have clips (clasps) to help the denture stay in place in your mouth. Depending on where the clips are, some of them may show when you smile or open your mouth.

Q. What is a bridge?

A. Bridges are ideal for people who don't like dentures and only have a few teeth missing. Bridges are usually made by putting a crown on the teeth on either side of the gap and then attaching a false tooth in the middle.

The bridge is fixed to the teeth and cannot be removed.

Another option is an adhesive bridge. This has 'wings' that are bonded to the back of the supporting teeth, with very little drilling needed.

Q. What are implants?

A. Implants are an alternative to dentures and bridges. They are titanium rods/screws that are placed surgically into the jawbone and act as anchors on which crowns, bridges or fixed dentures are placed. They are fixed in the mouth, and are therefore not removeable.

Q. Can I lighten the colour of my teeth?

A. Yes. Tooth whitening can be a highly effective way of lightening the natural colour of your teeth without removing any of the natural tooth surfaces.

Q. What does tooth whitening involve?

A. Most teeth whitening kits work using a bleaching agent, normally containing peroxide. This, when used at safe levels, is an effective way of removing the stains from within the tooth that cause discolouration.

There are a number of ways you can have a tooth whitening treatment administered.

There are two main types of whitening: Whitening at the dentist's office (chair side) or dentist supervised home whitening.

Your dentist will be able to discuss with you what is involved in each type and which one would be best to help get the result you want.

Chair-side 'power' whitening is achieved by applying a teeth whitening gel and then shining a powerful light on your teeth to accelerate the process of removing the internal tooth stains.

The bleaching solution used for a power whitening treatment usually contains a higher concentration of peroxide than would be used in other methods, so a protective gel will be applied to your lips and gums. In addition, the gums will be covered with rolls of cotton wool and a retractor will be used to keep your lips and cheeks a safe distance from your teeth. The whole process takes about 1-2 hours.

Some patients may experience an instant improvement but require dentist-supervised home whitening in addition, particularly when the level of staining is advanced and for longer lasting effects.

Dentist-supervised whitening (bleaching kits)

This method will take a couple of weeks and require multiple trips to your dentist. After a consultation, your first appointment will involve having a mould of your teeth cast using dental putty. Over the next 5-10 days a technician will use this mould to create a custom-made tooth whitening tray for you. Once the tray is ready, you'll go back to the dentist who will make sure the trays fit. Your dentist will instruct you how to perform the rest of the whitening treatment in your own home, and will review you after 2 weeks to see the changes. This home teeth whitening option is less expensive than chair-side whitening and you are less likely to get sensitivity with this type of whitening.

Q. Why go to a dentist when home whitening kits are available?

A. When dealing with a bleaching agent such as peroxide, it is possible to burn yourself. As a result, DIY home kits, including teeth whitening strips, cannot be sold at the same strength as professionals would use.

This means they will be less effective, or require a more frequent use to achieve the same results. This, in turn, could lead to gum irritation and sensitive teeth.

Incorrect use or overuse of bleach could also damage the enamel, which is why these treatments should be avoided, even if they appear cheaper than professional treatment.

Q. What is an incorrect bite?

A. This is when the teeth do not meet together properly or are not in balance with the rest of the face. It can also happen if teeth are lost and not replaced.

Q. What can happen if not treated?

A. If an incorrect bite is not treated, the face can 'collapse'. This can cause the face to sag, the chin to stick out or the smile to droop. It can even cause headaches, neck pain and pain in other parts of the body.

Q. How can it be treated?

A. There are a number of treatments including crowns, veneers and orthodontics (braces). Ask your dental team which treatment is most suitable for you. Sometimes you may require a combination of the different treatments to obtain the correct results.

Q. Can my crooked or twisted teeth be straightened?

A. Teeth can be straightened with orthodontics (braces). This is usually done during the childhood/teenage years when the jaws are going through a period of growth. However, many adults also have treatment to straighten their crooked teeth to improve their appearance and their bite. Treatment in adults can sometimes take longer than in the growing child/teenager.

There are many options now available for 'cosmetic braces', for those adults who may not want others to know that they are having their teeth straightened. This can be in the form of clear aligners, ceramic brackets and wires and lingual braces. For the clear aligners, your dentist will make you a series of clear plastic shields which need to be worn all day and gradually move your teeth into a new position. You can also now get ceramic brackets and wires, instead of metal ones, which blend in with the colour of your teeth.

Lingual braces are fixed braces (train-tracks), but instead of being on the front part of the teeth, they are fitted on the back (lingual) side of the teeth, so that they cannot be seen.

If you are considering orthodontic treatment, first see your dental team and get their advice. Your dental team can talk to you about your treatment options and if necessary, refer you to an orthodontist – a dentist who has had extra training and specialises in straightening teeth.

Q. Are there any alternatives to orthodontics to straighten teeth?

A. Cosmetic contouring (reshaping) can be used in combination with aesthetic bonding, veneers or crowns to improve the shape of the teeth. It is ideal if you have irregular shaped or slightly crowded teeth.

However, in contouring the teeth a small amount of enamel (the top layer of the tooth) would be lost.

Contouring can also be used to improve the shape and appearance of the gums around the teeth. These treatments are not recommended for children.

Q. What is tooth jewellery?

A. Tooth jewellery involves sticking small jewels onto the teeth using a dental cement. These should only be fitted by a dentist, who is able to easily remove them if necessary.

Do not stick the jewellery onto the tooth yourself/at a beauty clinic as this can result in damage and discoloration of the tooth, if the wrong glue/cement is used.

It is very important to keep the area around the jewel clean, as plaque can easily build up around it and you will be more likely to get tooth decay. Tooth jewellery can sometimes also result in damage to the tooth/other teeth/the gums. If you are considering tooth jewellery, first see your dental team and get their advice.

apples

OILIBYA PLAZA
apples
+sense
INSPIRING HEALTH
Comprehensive medical centre

TO PARKLANDS
/ RUNDA

TO KIAMBU

TO THIKA

TO PARKLANDS
/ WESTLANDS

TO TOWN

TO PANGANI

apples
+sense
INSPIRING HEALTH
Comprehensive medical centre

1st Floor, Oilibya Plaza, Muthaiga.
P.O.Box 64829-00620, Nairobi, Kenya
0790 307 260 and 0780 367 367.
appointments@applesandsense.com