

Minimally invasive cosmetic dentistry

By: Kristen Berning, DDS



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It is said that the first thing other people notice about you is your eyes. Next is your smile. A poll of 1,000 adults, conducted by Caravan Opinion

Research Corporation International, revealed the following:

- 90% of those surveyed believe an attractive smile is an asset to one's career.
- Over half of the respondents (58%) reported they are more likely to trust someone who has an attractive smile than one who doesn't.
- 87% said they would be more likely to fall in love with someone who has an attractive smile than someone who doesn't.

Technology has changed drastically in recent years, allowing patients to choose minimally invasive procedures to restore the health, beauty and function to their teeth. Minimally invasive dentistry, such as bonded tooth colored fillings, allows less tooth structure to be removed, making it better dentistry for the patient! This type of dental work seals the tooth, while making it stronger and better looking. People are living longer and want minimally invasive dental treatment that allows them to maintain the comfort, function, health, and aesthetics of their smile.

Minimally Invasive Fillings

When a tooth is decayed or

chipped, patients can preserve more of their natural tooth structure with procedures such as tooth colored composite resin fillings, compared to the old technique with mercury-silver amalgam fillings. The tooth colored fillings require removal of less tooth and are bonded to the tooth. These bonded composite fillings can actually seal and reinforce the tooth. The mercury-silver amalgam fillings require removal of more tooth and do not bond to the tooth. Over time, the metal fillings expand and contract, acting as wedges and cause cracking of the tooth structure.

Minimally Invasive Aesthetic Inlays and Onlays

Inlays and onlays are indicated in situations where a posterior tooth is moderately broken down due to decay or tooth fracture. They can be used to replace a large failing mercury-silver filling. These restorations are made of porcelain or composite resin and fabricated by a dental laboratory. Inlays and onlays are bonded to the tooth and can actually reinforce and strengthen the remaining tooth structure. Patients love them because they look very natural and enhance the appearance of their teeth. A tooth colored restoration such as an inlay or onlay is stronger, lasts longer, and is better looking than the mercury-silver fillings. Onlays are ideal for situations where placement of a full crown may be unnecessarily aggressive.

Veneers

Veneers are the "razzle-dazzle" of

cosmetic procedures and can be used to upgrade a patient's smile.

Direct resin veneers are "nip and tuck" dentistry. Direct resin veneers usually do not require removal of any tooth structure. They are hand sculpted and bonded to teeth to repair chipped or worn teeth and close small spaces or gaps between teeth. Direct resin veneers can be used to mask discolorations or correct minor flaws. They are an excellent choice for treating teeth with injuries or imperfections in kids and young adults. Since they will likely live to be in their 80s, it is important to do the most conservative treatment.

Porcelain veneers are thin shells of porcelain that are bonded to the front side of teeth. These types of veneers may require removal of a

oration, and imperfections of teeth. In addition, they can improve rotations or crowding and provide more drastic changes than direct resin veneers.

Choosing Minimally Invasive Dentistry

After choosing esthetic, minimally invasive dental treatment, patients are thrilled. They look in the mirror and cannot believe how real and natural their smile appears. Sometimes people are so pleased with the result that tears of joy come to their eyes. Many say that their mouths feel much cleaner and healthier. They are less worried about fillings or teeth breaking. Restoring the health, beauty, and function improves how a patient feels about their smile and increases self confidence.

Being able to provide minimally invasive dentistry that combines the latest techniques and best materials requires a dentist who has committed him or herself to additional training. The dental procedures are detailed and technique sensitive. The materials are higher quality and therefore more expensive. Dental insurance companies sometimes do not provide benefits for the best procedures. A dental insurance benefit may instead be based on the cost of a cheaper, mercury-silver filling. Patients who value what is best for their mouths, select the best dentistry.

People desire health and beauty in their smile, and for the first time in dentistry, they can get both.



These photos are actual cases performed by Dr. Murray

small amount of tooth structure, but are more conservative than full coverage crowns. Porcelain veneers can be used in the same situations mentioned above for direct resin veneers: chipping, wear, spaces, discol-

How to find a cosmetic dentist

By: Ted Murray, DDS, MAGD

Accredited Member in the Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry



Ted Murray

To be sure you are in good hands there are a few things you can do to find a well-trained cosmetic dentist.

1. Begin by finding a dentist who has specific training in aesthetic dentistry.

Remember cosmetic dentistry is NOT taught in undergraduate dental schools.

However, there are a few university based post-graduate dental residency programs where dentists can earn their Certificates in Aesthetic Dentistry. There are also some independent institutes that specialize in

advanced training and have a curriculum designed around cosmetic dentistry. These programs MUST include clinical hands-on training where dentists treat actual patients under the close supervision of a faculty and clinical instructors. Ask the dentist if there are certificates available to verify the advanced training.

2. When you find a dentist that satisfies these criteria schedule an appointment. Ask to see pictures of some actual cosmetic cases this dentist has done showing before and after pictures. Be sure these are his or her own cases and the dentist actually took the pictures. Be certain the pictures are not a catalogue of images purchased commercially of someone else's work. A competent cosmetic dentist has the needed equipment and has taken the advanced photography courses to document their work.

3. Be sure you are prepared to

discuss what you don't like and what you do like about your smile.

4. During your initial examination be sure the dentist does a comprehensive evaluation. He or she should take the time to look at everything, not just the front teeth. All things must be evaluated including the gums and the bite.

5. The dentist should be Accredited by one of the major cosmetic dental groups. The largest and most credible is the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry. The accreditation process is a difficult evaluation and examination process that serves to set the standard for excellence in Cosmetic Dentistry. It requires dedication to advanced training, careful adherence to protocols and resolve to produce exceptional dentistry.

6. Remember that these advanced procedures are expensive by nature and are not covered by

insurance plans. Like everything else you get what you pay for.

7. If a lab is to be used ask the dentist about the laboratory or ceramist he or she uses. Does the lab have experience in complex cosmetic cases? Is the ceramist Accredited by the Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry?

Dr. Ted Murray is the only dentist in Eastern Iowa accredited by the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry. He is an instructor of cosmetic dentistry at the world-renowned Las Vegas Institute of Advanced Dental Studies. Dr. Murray was awarded his certificate in Aesthetic Dentistry after completing a post graduate program of the University of Minnesota. His Daughter, Dr Kristen Berning attends Las Vegas Institutes of Advanced Dental Studies. Dr. Murray and Dr. Berning are at 4200 Asbury Road.