

***Why consider cosmetic  
dental treatment?  
Because looking good means feeling well***



## ***Modern cosmetic dental treatment is about more than good looks***

Do your teeth make you feel self-conscious about your smile? Do your gums bleed, or your teeth ache? Do you suffer from headaches, jaw pain, or other TMJ symptoms? Is a sleep disorder such as snoring, or sleep apnea affecting the quality of your life?

What if we told you you can address these oral health issues, and improve the appearance of your teeth at the same time?

Today, the materials and technology behind cosmetic dental treatments has advanced to the point that dentists can help their patients achieve the looks they want while addressing dental issues that can cause more painful or serious conditions like gum disease, TMJ, sleep apnea and snoring.



### **Why your oral health is so important**

Tooth decay, gum disease, and poor oral hygiene can have a negative impact on your overall health. In fact, recent studies suggest oral inflammatory disease can contribute to systemic health problems. Problems with a misaligned bite can cause painful TMJ symptoms, and contribute to nighttime breathing problems that impact the quality of your sleep

Simply put, your oral health is an important component of your general health. Since we visit dentists and medical doctors separately, we often think of the two as different or unconnected, but, the truth is, your oral health and your general health are intricately linked.

If you are in pain or feeling poorly as a result of an oral health problem you are not in good health.

## How can cosmetic dental treatments help your appearance and oral health?

### Overcoming damage, decay and infection

Preventative care is the best way to protect yourself from dental disease. Regular brushing, diligent flossing, and twice yearly professional cleanings and dental exams help you keep problems like tooth decay, oral cancer and gum disease in check.

However, regardless of how conscientious you are about your oral health care regime, decay and infection can creep in. When it does, restorative treatments can often help you recover good oral health.

### Filling cavities

While there are many types of dental fillings, we prefer white fillings. Fillings that contain metal can be problematic both health and appearance-wise:

Because metal expands and contracts with exposure to heat or cold, metal fillings can crack or leave gaps between the tooth and the filling, opening the door to bacteria and decay.

As far as appearance goes, white fillings can be matched to your tooth's colour keeping your teeth looking as natural and healthy as possible.

In some cases metal can cause allergic reactions.

Most often, white fillings are made of composite resin. For larger cavities porcelain inlays or onlays may be recommended. For severely decayed teeth, a dental crown can restore strength and enhance appearance.



## Replacing missing teeth

Missing teeth can pose problems for your appearance and the health of your mouth, gums, and jawbones.

- The gaps that missing teeth leave can be difficult to keep clean, and more susceptible to decay
- Remaining teeth can begin to shift due to the space left by a missing tooth or teeth. This can lead to bite alignment issues, and can impact your appearance.
- Without the stimulation of your teeth chewing against each other, your jawbone can lose mass. With many missing teeth, this can lead to a sunken, aged appearance as your chin begins to creep towards your nose.

Cosmetic dental treatments can help alleviate these problems. How?

- **Dental implants** most effectively replace missing teeth. They consist of a titanium “root” that’s surgically implanted into your jawbone. The implant fuses with your bone in a process known as osseointegration. Once healed, the titanium root is capped with a dental crown. When well-cared for, dental implants are a very solid, long-lasting tooth replacement treatment.
- **Modern dentures** are another effective tooth replacement treatment. Different from the dentures you may remember your elders wearing, today’s dentures can resolve neuromuscular (TMJ) issues, halt jawbone loss and boost your appearance.
- **Dental bridges** literally bridge the gap left by missing teeth. By using two remaining teeth as abutments, modern bridges are an effective treatment for several missing teeth.
- **Implant supported dentures** combine the technology of dental implants with the cost effectiveness of dentures.

### Repairing damaged teeth

Broken, worn, cracked, or severely decayed teeth can be repaired with dental bonding, veneers, or crowns. All three treatments can be colour matched to your natural teeth, and help strengthen and protect them from further damage or decay.

### Tackling appearance problems

Like it or not, appearance matters. That's why we have hair salons, make-up, and workplace dress-codes. A well-groomed appearance says a lot about you, and the condition of your smile can affect your self-esteem and how others react to you. Luckily, cosmetic dental treatments can reverse the wear and tear daily life can have on your teeth.

Here's how:

- **Teeth whitening:** Teeth naturally yellow as we age. Add staining foods and drinks like red wine, colas, and dark berries to the mix, and say hello to aged looking teeth. Teeth whitening can bring back a more youthful, attractive appearance to teeth that have discoloured over time
- **Orthodontics:** Crooked teeth can impact your appearance and the functionality of your bite. Orthodontics - either traditional metal or clear braces, or more modern invisible braces - can help move your teeth into a more attractive and functional position.
- **Dental veneers:** Gaps, cracks, or spots on teeth can be repaired with dental veneers. Veneers are sometimes referred to as instant orthodontics because they can quickly improve the appearance of crooked teeth.
- **Dental bonding:** Misshapen teeth, teeth worn by excessive clenching or grinding, decayed teeth and many more dental issues can be treated simply with dental bonding. Bonding has its aesthetic benefits as well as it can be colour matched to your natural teeth.

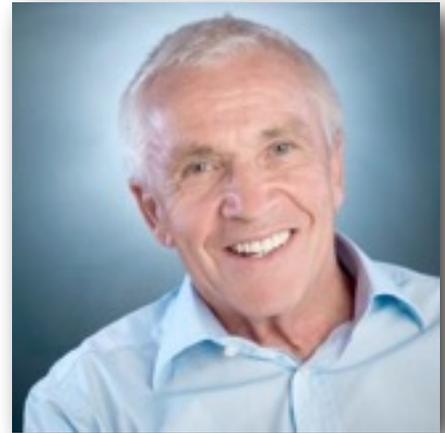


## Treating TMJ symptoms

Oral health problems can ripple down to affect other parts of your body. As noted earlier, your oral health is connected to your general health simply because your mouth is a part of your body.

When you have problems with your bite, whether it's due to a jaw injury, missing or damaged teeth, an underdeveloped jaw, occlusion issues, or genetics, you may feel its impact in seemingly unrelated areas such as your:

- head
- face
- ears
- eyes
- neck
- shoulders
- back
- arms.



This is because, when your bite is misaligned, your jaw muscles and your jaw joint begin to battle each other. As your jaw joint seeks its most comfortable position, the one where your teeth meet, your jaw muscles struggle to keep your bite effective for chewing and speaking.

Eventually your jaw muscles tire, and recruit the surrounding muscles of your face, head, neck, shoulders and back to help out. As these muscles tire, the result can be aching muscle pain in any of these areas.

On top of the muscle strain, nerves that are associated with these muscles can become cramped or compressed, sending pain signals to your brain. This is why TMJ can result in ear pain, headaches, eye pain and numbness or tingling in your arms, hands or fingers.

### How can cosmetic dental treatments treat TMJ?

- **Replacing missing teeth:** Missing teeth can cause your bite to become misaligned. By replacing them, your dentist can help bring balance back to your bite, relieving the strain on your jaw muscles. Dental implants, bridges and dentures are all effective tooth replacement treatments.
- **Rebuilding worn teeth:** Excessive tooth wear caused by grinding or clenching can cause your teeth to wear and shorten. This problem can be a bit of a catch-22. Grinding and clenching can be caused by a misaligned bite, but stress induced clenching and grinding can impact teeth and result in a misaligned bite. That's why it's important to note that addressing the source of the misalignment is critical for successful treatment
- **Widening the arch** and straightening the teeth: Orthodontics are used to both straighten teeth, and reshape a too narrow upper dental arch. This treatment not only helps to alleviate TMJ symptoms, it can also improve facial symmetry and aesthetics.
- **Realigning the bite** and rejuvenating the smile: Restorative dental treatments such as crowns, bonding, veneers, implants, bridges, and orthodontics can help to bring balance back to your bite, once the correct posture for your jaw joint has been determined. By restoring your smile, you can improve its functionality and appearance.



## Getting back to healthy sleep

A misaligned bite can also impact your sleep. As you relax into the deeper stages of sleep, the stages that are so critical for rest and rejuvenation, your throat muscles and tissues relax. If your bite is not balanced, your lower jaw can relax so far back it partially blocks your throat.

Snoring is often the result of this partial blockage. As air is forced through the narrowed passages, the throat tissues vibrate causing the snoring sound. The smaller the opening, the bigger the force and, often, the louder the snoring.



While many people see snoring as just a noisy nuisance, it can be an indicator of a more serious condition - sleep apnea. With sleep apnea, the blocked airways actually stop your breathing for several seconds. When your brain recognizes the lack of oxygen, it briefly awakens you to resume breathing.

This can occur dozens of times each night, preventing you from reaching the deep restorative state of sleep you need to effectively recharge. The result? Daytime fatigue and sleep deprivation that can lead to weight gain, depression, relationship problems, and job performance and safety issues.

As noted earlier, cosmetic dental treatments can help to resolve a misaligned bite, potentially helping you get back to restful, healthy sleep.

## Become beautifully healthy

Good health is naturally beautiful. That's why we, as humans, are hard-wired to respond positively to beauty. The healthier our mates, children and communities are, the more likely we are to live well.

When it comes to your oral health, modern cosmetic dental treatments offer a route back to good health. By tackling the dental issues discussed in this e-book, you can:

- improve your oral health
- take a forward step towards better general health
- live well
- feel great

