

# Cosmetic Dentistry

## It can really make a difference.

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Have you ever asked yourself, “Could my smile be brighter?” or “Is it possible for me to get my discolored, (misshaped, chipped or crooked) teeth to look good?” Thanks to the wonders of modern cosmetic dentistry, the answer is very likely to be, “ Not only is it possible, but in many cases, it’s quick, painless and surprisingly affordable.”

You may be able to spruce your mouth up with one, maybe two, of the vast array of cosmetic dental procedures available these days.

- Bleaching lightens teeth that have been stained or discolored by food and age, or darkened as a result of injury. There are two ways to professionally bleach teeth. Your CDA member dentist can apply a bleaching solution to one or more of your teeth per visit, over the course of several appointments. Or, you can be fitted with a custom-made bleaching tray that you wear for a couple of hours every night at home. This process can take one to six weeks.
- Bonding involves applying a tooth-colored plastic putty called composite resin to the surface of your chipped, broken or discolored teeth. The composite resin can also fill in gaps between your teeth and protect roots that are exposed due to gum recession. The entire procedure is virtually painless and is usually completed in one visit. However, complex cases may require several appointments.
- Porcelain veneers are thin, custom-made, tooth-colored shells that cover the front of your teeth. Once applied, they correct or camouflage misaligned, poorly shaped, damaged, or discolored teeth. The process of applying veneers usually involves two visits to your CDA dentist.
- If your teeth are a bit overcrowded or uneven, they can be slightly contoured in a procedure called enamel shaping or cosmetic recontouring. For instance, a tooth looks much longer than the rest, some enamel can be removed and your tooth can be reshaped. The process is usually quick and painless.
- Recent advances in orthodontic treatment, such as less visible and more effective brackets and wires, now make straightening crooked teeth more palatable for many adults. How long you’ll have to wear them depends on the severity of your problem, the health of your teeth, gums and supporting bone, and your age.
- A lost tooth or teeth can be replaced with dental implants. Dental implants are artificial teeth that are attached directly into your jaw. They’re much more secure and natural looking than dentures or bridgework, but they can be expensive and the entire process can be quite lengthy. Longtime denture wearers also benefit from implants by having their loose-fitting dentures secured to a specially designed implant attachment.

If you’re feeling somewhat self-conscious about your teeth, or just want a more beautiful smile, talk to your CDA dentist about these cosmetic dentistry options.