

Hollywood SMILE

DENTAL AND IMPLANT SURGEON
JEAN PAUL DEMAJO HIGHLIGHTS THE
INS AND OUTS OF DENTAL VENEERS



When one talks about arranging their teeth or wanting to have brilliant white teeth they usually quote names of Hollywood film stars and talk about veneers. But what are veneers? A veneer is a facing of porcelain or composite that is stuck to the front of a tooth with the aim of aesthetically improving the overall smile.

USES OF VENEERS

- **Tooth whitening:** discoloured teeth due to antibiotics, heavy smoking, age or genetic make-up may be changed once and for all. The final colour of the teeth may be as white as the patient wishes.
- **Tooth alignment:** crooked teeth may be straightened with ease eliminating the need of braces. Patients often correct the upper anterior 4 to 8 teeth and at times also the matching bottom ones. This corrects the front teeth mostly visible when smiling. Veneers have limitations for tooth alignment.
- **Tooth adjustment:** teeth may be widened, lengthened, angulated and adjusted in any dimension to match up with the adjacent teeth in order to achieve symmetry. Small spaces in between teeth or chipped teeth may also be corrected.

Composite veneers are built-up by the dentist while the patient is in the dental chair (direct veneers). This is done by sticking composite resin or filling material with glue onto the teeth. On the other hand porcelain veneers are fabricated in the laboratory. A conventional silicone impression is cast into a model and using the model the technician builds a porcelain veneer. This method requires more than one appointment allowing a few days in between appointments for construction.


ADVANTAGES

- Very aesthetic
- Quick
- Not too expensive
- Gentle to tooth structure
- Most veneers come with a guarantee

DISADVANTAGES

- Veneers have limitations when adjusting tooth angulation
- Minor tooth preparation may be required
- Veneer may come off and have to be re-cemented

New methods of digital impression are also available. Photos of the prepared teeth are shot. The images are loaded onto a dental restorative program and the veneers are designed. The digital view displayed on the computer software aids the patient to visualize the future set of veneers and also allows the patient to modify it to his or her preference prior to its fabrication. The chosen design is then sent to an on-site milling machine which mills (or cuts) the porcelain veneer out of a pre-fabricated block of highly aesthetic porcelain in the colour chosen by the patient. This method, known as CAD-CAM design (computer-aided design) allows for the immediate fabrication of porcelain veneers within the hour. The patient may wait for these porcelain veneers and walk out of the same single appointment with a highly aesthetic result.

Patients often tend to laser whiten their non-veneered teeth, achieving the whiteness they've always wished for, and to choose the colour of the new veneers to match up with the whitened teeth. This holistic approach gives the full cosmetic result the patient always wished for. 



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