

# Do You Like Your Smile?

Discover the secret behind a gorgeous smile!

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If you are dissatisfied with your smile and want to improve it, there are five features of your smile you need to look at carefully.

## 1. Colour

In a survey by the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry, respondents were asked, "What do you think makes a smile unattractive?"

The most common response was discoloured, yellow, or stained teeth. If your teeth are like that, there are a few steps you can take:

- If you have tobacco, coffee or wine stains, it is just a matter of having your teeth professionally cleaned and the stains will be gone.
- If your teeth are sound with no fillings or exposed dentine, then consider brightening your teeth. There are now professionally prescribed, whitening gels that are safe to use at home, at your own time.
- If you have old fillings that have become rough and stained due to wear and tear, have them replaced to get more even-coloured teeth.
- In extreme cases of deep-seated discolouration, you may need porcelain veneers or even crowns to improve the colour of your smile.

**Here is a tip for ladies:** Remember that deep reds or even blue-toned lipsticks can make your teeth look whiter. On the other hand, orange, yellow-toned and frosted lipsticks can make the teeth look darker.

## 2. Shape

Porcelain veneers and crowns can do more than improve colour, they can also mask the shape of mal-formed teeth. With the new generation of porcelains, veneers and crowns can give a natural, translucent appearance to your teeth. They can also be long lasting – if you don't have habits like gnashing of teeth or cracking of ice cubes and bones.

In some cases, a simple addition of tooth-coloured filling or "bonding" may be all that is needed.

### **Editor's Note:**

*This article originally had "before" and "after" photos as examples of what can be achieved with porcelain and teeth whitening. These photos have been deleted as the Ministry of Health of Singapore disallows the publication of "before" and "after" photos.*

## 3. Position

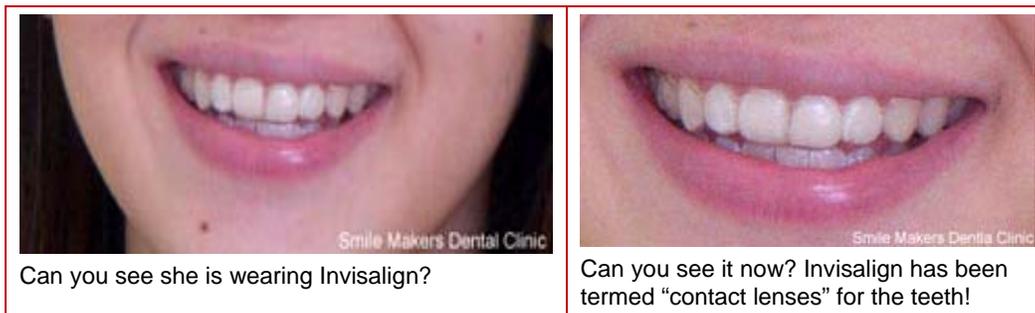
**When Americans were asked "What is the first thing you notice in a person's smile?"**

The most common response was "Straightness of the teeth". Indeed having straight white teeth gives the impression of refinement and sophistication.

If teeth are crooked, the best thing to do is to straighten them by moving them gently through the jaw bone. This can be done with conventional fixed braces. Braces can be metal or, for those more self-conscious, there is the option of ceramic (porcelain) braces. These are far less conspicuous. Of course, they cost a little more.

If you are concerned about image especially when meeting clients, or if the thought of having metal and wires fixed to your teeth seem too much to bear, find out if your condition is suitable for the Invisalign system that uses a series of clear, removable aligners to gently move the teeth – without anyone knowing. As the aligners can be removed for eating and cleaning, it does offer convenience and less discomfort than metal braces.

For those who really can't wait for their teeth to be straightened with braces or aligners, there might be "quick fixes" with veneers and crowns. But remember that getting a crown or a bridge means irreversibly cutting your teeth to mask their crooked position.



#### 4. Spaces left by lost teeth

A broad smile with missing teeth can be amusing to some. Showing gaps between teeth – even back teeth – can make one look prematurely old. Traditional dentures can give very satisfactory results at relatively low cost. Bridges and implants can allow artificial teeth to feel like one's own. And, they don't need to be removed for cleaning. A consultation will let you understand the best way to replace lost teeth – within constraints of budget, time and oral condition.

#### 5. Hygiene

Even if you have no issues with the colour, shape, or position of your teeth, there is one aspect of your smile that nobody can ignore – hygiene. Flashing a smile with food stuck between teeth can be comical in the movies but in a business and professional setting, it is a turn-off.

Keep your pearly white teeth beautiful and your gums in the pink of health by keeping them clean. This means brushing and flossing them daily. In addition, daily home maintenance must be supported with regular professional care that includes checks of your fillings or dentures; and removal of hardened deposits like tartar that inevitably builds up with time. Learn the right techniques and practice them daily.

#### Conclusion

Your smile is one part of your appearance that can be kept attractive long after middle-age has widened your middle, or time has taken its toll on your skin. So get a gorgeous smile and use it confidently – for a long time!



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