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London
City Dental

What to expect from your smile today?

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These days most of us can expect to live to an advanced age – and keep our natural teeth. However, it's little consolation having your own teeth if they look worn, stained and old. Indeed most people want attractive teeth as well as natural teeth.

So exactly what is considered attractive when it comes to teeth? And how can a cosmetic dentist help you achieve this?



Before



After

● The effect of a smile

Today, 60-year-olds often look fitter and healthier than their grandparents did at 40. In the affluent West, many people can expect to live to 90 or beyond – and expect to keep their own teeth too. They are also doing more to have a nice smile.

What's the most important and powerful expression you can show a person whom you love or are attracted to? It's your smile. Your eyes and mouth are the two areas that people notice most. Why else, after all, would women apply lipstick? If a woman has unattractive teeth, what is the point in drawing attention to the lips? Your smile, therefore, is all-powerful.

● How much of our teeth do we show naturally?

When speaking, many people reveal only the bottom and a little of the top teeth – although it depends on the shape of each individual mouth. As we smile, we draw our cheek muscles back and show more top teeth as well as side and back teeth. When we laugh, we even show the chewing surfaces of the teeth inside the mouth. We do it without thinking.

The English, with their stiff-upper-lip tradition, however, are more inclined to hide their teeth – which may be justified because the teeth are often in poor condition and/or of poor aesthetics. In contrast, many Americans aspire to a wide, white and toothy Hollywood smile. A natural smile falls somewhere between the two.

Women tend to have a higher lip line than men. They show not only all their upper teeth when they smile but a lot of pink gum as well, sometimes excessively so! An open, uninhibited smile and certainly an unrestrained laugh will often display 24 out of the maximum of 32 teeth. That's a lot of tooth area if your teeth aren't your best asset.

● What is attractive in today's culture?

Nowadays, natural-looking teeth are deemed the most attractive. Metal teeth (either silver or gold) are outmoded as are false-looking square bits of white ivory and missing teeth.

We all aspire to beautiful teeth that look natural and youthful. You want people to think that nature has given you a most fortunate gift – like having clear skin, lovely eyes or a beautiful figure. Teeth certainly should not look as if they were the product of some dentist's handiwork.

What is beautiful then? In our view it is well-proportioned teeth, naturally light and bright, that have a harmony with the lips, face, build and personality of their owner. Symmetry is important, but perfection is not. Natural teeth always have small imperfections – which should be recreated in any cosmetic dentistry work.

● What can be done for you?

Small changes can have a dramatic effect, as you can see from the before and after pictures on the www.cap600.com web site. Many people are still unaware of how modern dentistry can help them. What are the options? How much do they cost? What is involved in each treatment plan? It's often unclear.

The dental profession cannot absolve itself of responsibility – because a dental visit is the right time when such points should be discussed. Many dentists don't have the time to practice anything other than "crisis management / patchwork" dentistry (you know, the "let's get your filling done and think about other issues later" approach).

Other dentists, even many top practitioners, are too focused on the technical side and not sufficiently skilled in aesthetic matters. They won't discuss aesthetics unless the patient asks them – and even then, they may not be enthusiastic about it. The trouble is that when it comes to cosmetic or aesthetic dentistry, few people know what to ask for or even how to ask for it.

● What's special about a cosmetic dentist?

Cosmetic/aesthetic dentistry needs a certain flair, as well as a lot of practice. It's a familiar pattern in any profession. Would you expect your GP doctor to do a nose job on you, or your family lawyer to advise you on a complex commercial matter? To be really good, a cosmetic dentist should combine superb technical skills, a sense of art and be a great communicator. After all, once the dentist sees what can be done, he or she has to be able to transmit that information in a way that patients can visualize for themselves.

● How cosmetic dentistry can help you

Awareness on one side and special skills on the other create an attractive smile. Good dentists can advise you. These will be either specialists or those who have developed a strong interest, experience and success in the field of aesthetic or cosmetic dentistry.

Modern dentistry provides many innovative solutions that were hardly known even a decade ago. Consult with cosmetic/aesthetic dental specialists to see how you can have the appearance that you always wanted for yourself, whether this is a minor correction or the full works.

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