

Considering A Cosmetic Dental Procedure? Consult An Orthodontist First

(NAPSA)—In a never-ending quest to obtain a dazzling smile, more and more North Americans are opting for costly cosmetic dental procedures. Unfortunately, many of these procedures fail to address underlying dental problems that may compromise a patient's long-term dental health down the line. The American Association of Orthodontists (AAO) is urging people who are unhappy with the appearance of their teeth, or the state of their oral health, to get to the root of the problem and correct it rather than simply seek a quick cosmetic fix.

“Adults considering cosmetic dental procedures to cover unsightly teeth should consult an orthodontist, who can work with the patient's general dentist and other dental specialists to produce a healthy, beautiful smile,” says William Gaylord, DDS, MSD, orthodontist and president of AAO. “Patients may be pleasantly surprised to learn that what they perceive as unattractive teeth are generally healthy, just misaligned.”

Veneers or bonding may not be advisable when teeth are out of alignment because they do not correct underlying dental problems. In fact, “quick fixes” may lead to unintended consequences, such as increased risk of periodontal disease and expensive, invasive restorations.

However, veneers or bonding procedures may be appropriate after orthodontic treatment to make broken or misshapen teeth look and function better. Such cosmetic enhancements may be easier to place and last longer after teeth are properly aligned.

Recent studies have shown a possible correlation between periodontal disease and heart disease. The message is clear: Good oral health is essential for good overall health.



When seeking a dazzling smile, don't compromise your oral health with a quick cosmetic fix. Take the healthy route and have an orthodontist correct the underlying problem.

Dr. Gaylord advises patients who want a healthy, beautiful smile that invasive cosmetic procedures alone may not be in their best interest. “Patients shouldn't have to trade health for beauty—and they don't need to. They can have it all.”

Given today's technological advances, orthodontic treatment has become a much more comfortable and simplified process. “Major orthodontic advances include titanium alloy wires, smaller brackets applied directly to the tooth surface, high-tech adhesives, and computer software that aids in diagnosis, which permits the orthodontist to plan the most appropriate treatment for each patient,” says Dr. Gaylord.

Although orthodontic treatment does not produce same-day results, some patients may only require limited treatment. In addition, orthodontic treatment is affordable and is often covered by dental insurance plans.

For more information about orthodontic procedures or to find AAO members, visit the online “Find an Orthodontist” service at www.braces.org.