

COLUMN

Five myths about porcelain veneers

The word “veneers” has become a common term in dentistry over the past decade. Some people associate porcelain veneers with Hollywood movie stars while others have friends who have had a “smile makeover.” These cosmetic restorations are used to correct chipped, worn-down, decayed or stained teeth and are able to correct undesirable spaces or alignment of teeth. Unfortunately, most people do not realize what is involved when porcelain veneers are performed or even some of the real reasons of why they are used in dentistry. There are also several misconceptions that dentists have heard concerning this procedure that may be preventing people from pursuing the smile of their dreams. Hopefully, this month will dispel these myths and help educate you on some of the truths of why porcelain veneers can be an excellent way to restore or improve a smile.

1. Veneers look “fake” and are too white to look natural. This is one of the most common comments I hear from people who are unfamiliar with modern cosmetic dentistry. Older versions of veneers were thick and opaque, almost having the “chicklet” look. If you can tell that a person has veneers in their mouth, it is because they have older-style dentistry, possibly with metal underneath (have you ever seen that black line along someone’s gumline?). Today’s materials are all-porcelain and so natural-looking that we can make them blend with your surrounding teeth, making them seamless with your smile. We custom stain these restorations so that they have depth, translucency and characteristics that natural teeth possess. I always recommend going to a dentist’s website to view their smile gallery so that you can see how natural porcelain veneers can be.

2. You have to have your whole tooth cut down to have veneers. This could not be further from the truth. It is necessary for your teeth to undergo some reshaping; after all, you don’t want your new porcelain veneers to look too bulky simply for the sake of preserving tooth

structure. However, this usually entails only .5-1 mm of enamel on the front of your tooth continuing slightly onto the tongue side. In fact, this is a much more conservative treatment option than a full crown or cap. So in reality, veneers are an excellent choice for us to improve the shape and color of your teeth while being significantly conservative.

3. They are painful and cause sensitivity. The procedure itself is completely painless with local anesthetic. Over-the-counter medications are sometimes

structure being lost. In addition, this loss of height in their teeth can lead to severe TMJ problems including headaches, jaw pain, and migraines. Porcelain veneers are not just used for “vanity” reasons; they allow dentists the proper technique to restore a person’s teeth to healthy functioning.

Porcelain veneers have become very popular in today’s society due to the advances in dental technology and people’s overall desire for health and beauty. Unfortunately, most people do not realize that this procedure could be what they need to properly address some of their dental concerns. Hopefully, I have alleviated some of the

fears and misnomers concerning porcelain veneers and shown that they are a very good option for many people to consider.

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Dentally Speaking
by
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Before and after having porcelain veneers placed

necessary for mild tenderness following the procedure. The only instance, although rare, in which you may experience some slight sensitivity is when you’re wearing your temporary veneers in the interim before your permanent ones are finished. Once your new porcelain veneers have been placed, this sensation will be completely eliminated.

4. They’re too expensive. While this may sadly be true for some patients, many dental practices can offer payment plans or alternative financial options that may reduce your monetary obligations down to a couple hundred dollars a month. Carecredit is a great healthcare finance group that many of our patients utilize in our office. Be sure to talk to your dentist about porcelain veneers! Who knows – your dream smile may not be as far out of your reach as you think.

5. Veneers are ONLY used for cosmetic reasons. I believe this is the most misunderstood fact about porcelain veneers. The majority of porcelain veneers that are performed are for functional reasons and restore a person’s teeth to the proper form and health. Many people are severe grinders and clenchers which has resulted in 30-50 percent of their original tooth