



GETTING AND KEEPING A

Healthy, Beautiful Smile.

Smile Big. Smile Bright. Smile Bold.

Your smile. It's a part of your personality. It's how you present yourself to others. It defines you. That's why it's so important to take good care of the most important elements of your smile—your teeth, gums, and mouth. Because if you're not confident with your dental health and appearance, it can affect the way you feel about yourself—and how others perceive you. This practical guide will give you general tips on how to maintain optimum dental health year round, as well as provide some basic information on different cosmetic procedures so you can maintain a healthy, picture-perfect smile for years to come.





Make Sure Your Dental Care Stays On Schedule.

Life's busy. Between work and family commitments, it can be difficult to remember all of the tasks and priorities that face us every day.

For many people, skipping their regularly scheduled dental exams becomes an all-too-common habit. Often, patients are also worried about the cost of having dental procedures—a concern that keeps them away from the dentist even longer. The longer people wait between appointments, the more they will be inclined to continue neglecting their mouths. The results are typically more serious dental problems that

require more serious—and more costly—dental procedures to correct them.

Despite our hectic schedules, there's no reason to neglect proper dental care. Keeping your regularly scheduled dental exams and practicing good dental hygiene at home and at work will not only dramatically improve the health of your teeth and the quality of your smile; it could save you hundreds—if not thousands—of dollars in the process.

Prevention and Routine Treatments Are The Best Defense.

Modern dentistry is designed to prevent dental problems before they turn into more serious health issues. That's why it's commonly recommended that you visit your dentist regularly—at least once every six months—to ensure proper dental hygiene and appearance and maintain your overall health.

Dentists recommend that patients brush thoroughly at least twice a day, floss at least once a day and rinse with mouthwash to remove plaque and keep the mouth free from bacteria. Given the small amount of time it takes bacteria to invade the mouth, regular care is essential, especially considering all of the new studies that show how poor oral health can lead to many other serious health risks throughout your body.





Photos provided by
The Hornbrook Group.



Before cosmetic
dentistry.



After cosmetic
dentistry.

Types of Cosmetic Procedures.

Along with regular dental visits, there are a number of cosmetic procedures that can help you achieve and maintain better dental health. From subtle changes to major repairs, your dentist can perform a variety of procedures that can greatly improve your smile.

Tooth Whitening.

Tooth whitening, or bleaching, can safely and effectively lighten teeth darkened from age, coffee, tea or smoking, and restore them to their natural color for up to five years.

While there are a number of different treatment options, the safest and most effective methods of tooth whitening are supervised by a dentist. Most dentists will opt for using an in-office laser bleaching system. Some dentists may also create a custom-made mouthguard based on impressions of your teeth. Used with a bleaching solution, your form-fitted mouthguard can be comfortably worn while you are awake or asleep, giving you the freedom to whiten your teeth on your schedule. After the initial whitening, many patients choose to get a touch-up, which is usually much shorter than the original treatment time.

Veneers.

Veneers are ultra-thin shells of ceramic (porcelain) or a composite resin material, which are bonded to the front of teeth. An excellent alternative to crowns, veneers help mask tooth discolorations, stains, gaps, chips and other size and shape irregularities.

To prepare for the veneers, your dentist will lightly buff your teeth to allow for the small added thickness of the veneer. After the tooth is prepared, the dentist carefully bonds and sculpts the composite material onto your teeth. For ceramic veneers, a mold is taken of the teeth and sent to the laboratory to be fabricated. Temporary veneers may be placed for a few days until the fabricated veneers are completed. Generally, veneers will last for many years, and the technique has shown remarkable longevity when properly performed.

Braces.

More and more adults are also wearing braces to correct minor problems like crooked or crowded teeth, overbites or underbites, incorrect jaw position and disorders of the jaw joints.

Braces generally come in several different varieties. Ceramic brackets are typically clear or tooth-colored and are far less noticeable than metal brackets. Lingual, or concealed, braces attach to the back of teeth and are usually hidden from view. A new alternative to traditional braces is a series of clear, customized, removable appliances called aligners. Not only are these braces invisible, but they also are removable so they won't trap food and plaque between your teeth like metal braces.



Dental Implants.

Implants are artificial teeth that have numerous benefits since they are permanent and stable tooth replacements that don't rely on neighboring teeth for support. Made from various types of metallic and bone-like ceramic materials, implants are compatible with your body's tissue and can be placed either directly into the jaw bone or fitted with a custom-made metal framework.

While dental implants can last for many years, they can be adversely affected by smoking, teeth grinding, and overall poor oral hygiene. Even though dental implants cannot form cavities, maintaining proper oral hygiene is always recommended to protect the area around the implant as well as the rest of your mouth.

Note: Be sure to consult with your dentist on which procedures may be right for you.





How to Choose the Right Dentist.

Selecting the right dentist for you and your family's needs can depend on several different factors.

Usually, the best place to start is with a family dentist who can treat a wide range of general dental needs. If you need a specialized or cosmetic dental procedure performed, your general dentist may work with other dentists to make sure you get the care you need.

Some important items to consider when choosing a dentist include length of time the practice has been in operation, the extent of the dentist's training, range of procedures he or she performs, cosmetic procedures performed, office location, and costs of procedures. If you're looking for a cosmetic dentist, you may want to ask about a few additional items, such as patient recommendations, office technologies, and financing options.



Paying For Your Dental Care.

With some dental procedures costing hundreds—even thousands—of dollars, having the smile you've always wanted may sometimes seem more of a financial decision than a medical or lifestyle choice. Dental insurance covers most regularly-scheduled dental visits for cleaning and basic hygiene. But many times, other services are only partially covered—or not at all.

Luckily, there are several other financing options beyond dental insurance that can help you achieve your desired result, including CareCredit. CareCredit is the credit card designed for your health and beauty needs. CareCredit is a division of GE Capital and has been providing healthcare financing to patients for over 20 years. With CareCredit, you can get No Interest* financing every time you use it. Simply make your minimum monthly payment and pay off your entire balance by the due date, and you'll pay no interest. You can use your card over and over** for follow-up appointments or different procedures as needed. CareCredit also offers Extended Payment Plans which allow you to pay over more time with a low, fixed interest rate. It can be the ideal solution when you don't want to put your health and appearance on hold because of financial restrictions.

Visit www.carecredit.com today for more information or to apply for your instant approval. In just a matter of minutes, you'll be on your way to greater confidence and a winning smile.



Academy
of General Dentistry

The information in this brochure was provided in part by the Academy of General Dentistry (AGD). The AGD is a professional association of more than 35,000 general dentists dedicated to staying up-to-date in the profession through continuing education. A general dentist is the primary care provider for patients of all ages and is responsible for the diagnosis, treatment, management and overall coordination of services related to patients' oral health needs. Please visit www.agd.org to learn more.

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