

# **How to Select a Cosmetic Dentist**

*Looking 10 years younger with cosmetic dentistry can be easy if you do your homework*

Napoleon, OH The fact that people today have more of their own teeth coupled with our society's desire to look and feel great has increased the demand for cosmetic dental services. This demand, however, cannot be met by the average American dentist. Dental school training alone is typically inadequate to provide the beautiful new smiles of today's most advanced dentistry.

The following checklist for selecting a qualified cosmetic dentist was compiled after talking with many happy cosmetic patients and listening to their stories of how they chose an office for treatment. There are countless reasons patients have given for deciding to improve their smiles. Whatever your reasons, you can now take the next step: choosing the right cosmetic dentist for you. Remember, you should get at least two opinions before making a decision about such a significant investment in yourself.

- ❑ **Research the web for a list of cosmetic dentists in your area.** If you live in a rural area, you may or may not have to travel some distance to find an office. Websites such as Ivglobal.com can provide you a list of possible dentists to research. Try Google, Yahoo, MSN, or other search engines with keywords of "cosmetic dentist"+ "your city or region" to widen your search even more. There should be a link to the dentist's website in which you may be interested. If the dentist does not have a website, it is a very good indication he may not be up to date on the latest advancements in cosmetic dentistry.
- ❑ **Does the dentist have advanced training in cosmetic dentistry?** The best training is live hands-on patient treatment courses at post-graduate institutions such as the Las Vegas Institute for Advanced Dental Studies (LVI), the Rosenthal Institute, or Scottsdale Center.
- ❑ **Can the dentist show you pictures of their own successfully completed cosmetic cases?** Many dentists have stock photo albums in their offices purchased through any number of dental marketing companies. These generic photo albums contain work done by other dentists, not the one you are there to see. Successful cosmetic dentists will have photos of their own cosmetic patients on display, whether in a photo album, hanging on the walls, or on their websites.
- ❑ **Does the dentist discuss several treatment options?** If your teeth are worn, crooked, and/or discolored, porcelain veneers or crowns (\$1000-2000 per tooth) can deliver you a dazzling Hollywood smile, but there are other choices. For example, if your teeth are crowded and/or rotated, then braces or Invisalign (a series of clear retainers that move teeth) could be an option. Expect fees to be in the \$6000 range for these services. If your teeth are dark or yellow but in good alignment, then tooth whitening may give you a good result for less money (\$300-1000).
- ❑ **Is the dentist a member of a major cosmetic dental association?** Associations such as the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry (AACD), the International Association of Comprehensive Aesthetics (IACA), and American Association of

- Esthetic Dentistry (AAED) are examples of such organizations. Continuing education is offered through these organizations to keep cosmetic dentists up to date on the latest techniques and materials.
- ❑ **Does the dental office offer financing options?** Most dental offices offer convenient financing to make cosmetic care affordable. Patients can choose a monthly payment that fits their budgets, much like other major purchases such as cars or furniture.
  - ❑ **Are you comfortable with the dentist and his team?** If all of the above questions can be answered to your satisfaction, then it comes down to choosing who you like and who will listen and care for you the most. **DO NOT CHOOSE BASED ON PRICE.** You get what you pay for, and all cosmetic dentistry is not equal. It is a service, not a commodity.

I encourage you to clip this article and take it with you to prospective cosmetic dental offices. I hope I have made the decision to enhance your smile and your life easier.

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