

teeth worth smiling about

Sydney cosmetic dentist **Dr Michael Tam** discusses porcelain veneers, an increasingly popular way to achieve a brighter and more beautiful smile. Tara Casey reports.

In today's image-conscious society, most people realise the importance of an attractive smile. A bright, healthy-looking smile can have an impact on how people are perceived and can play a fundamental role in a person's self-image.

'Porcelain veneers are becoming an increasingly popular choice when treating stained teeth, chipped, or worn teeth,' says Sydney cosmetic dentist Dr Michael Tam. Many patients also realise an improved smile will enhance the effect of other facial rejuvenation treatments.

Case study 1



BEFORE (patient did not like the small, discoloured and irregular surface texture of her front teeth)



AFTER combination of tooth whitening and porcelain veneers by Dr Tam



BEFORE (patient did not like the small, discoloured and irregular surface texture of her front teeth)



AFTER combination of tooth whitening and porcelain veneers by Dr Tam

'If you are unhappy with your teeth, porcelain veneers may be a simple solution,' says Dr Tam. 'Improving your teeth can boost your confidence, and your new smile can make a positive, powerful and memorable statement to everyone you meet.'

The consultation process when considering porcelain veneers begins with addressing factors such as diagnostic records. Most cosmetic dentists will also use digital imaging software to allow the patient of the probable end result. The dentist should also discuss issues such as the patient's wants, treatment plans and outcomes, and possible risks and complications. According to Dr Tam, porcelain veneers are one of the most effective methods of minor tooth correction. 'Porcelain veneers have two key advantages over other types of bonding,' he says. 'Firstly, they are more translucent than other options such as tooth-coloured filling material, and their translucency gives them a very natural appearance because it mimics the effect of enamel. Secondly, porcelain is stain-resistant while other bonding options are not.'

As the name suggests, porcelain veneers are thin, semi-translucent facings, which are bonded to the front of each tooth to give the appearance of new teeth. They are best suited to minor tooth imperfections rather than major cosmetic issues. Consultation with a dentist will determine whether a patient will benefit from porcelain veneers.

'In certain situations, porcelain veneers are not an appropriate treatment,' Dr Tam says. 'This includes when tooth structure has been lost and the tooth is therefore unstable, or when there is an inadequate amount of enamel for veneers to be bonded to. If the patient's teeth are decayed or there is any active gum disease, this will need to be treated before any dental work can be performed.' 'People who constantly grind their teeth are also unsuitable candidates as this can weaken the veneers.'

In cases where the veneer does come off or break, a new veneer is made or the original is reapplied. Veneers can last over 10 years when taken care of, which includes brushing and flossing daily and avoiding activities such as grinding teeth and biting fingernails. **acsm**

Case study 2



BEFORE (patient was unhappy with her smile and was concerned with her teeth's dark appearance, worn enamel and irregular shape)



AFTER combination of tooth whitening and porcelain veneers by Dr Tam



BEFORE (patient was unhappy with her smile and was concerned with her teeth's dark appearance, worn enamel and irregular shape)



AFTER combination of tooth whitening and porcelain veneers by Dr Tam