

Brighten
up!

Don't just grin and bear a dull smile! There's plenty you can do to improve your teeth. Check out our strategies designed to enhance your pearly whites.

—Susan Williamson

Seven out of 10 Canadians will get gum disease at some point in their lives.

—The Canadian Dental Association

Lifestyle and maintenance:

Just say “no” to nicotine, as smoking yellows the teeth and increases plaque growth. Coffee, red wine and dark-coloured soft drinks can stain teeth, too. The American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry also recommends eating plenty of fruits and veggies: The combination of natural fibres and saliva produced while chewing them cleans teeth and removes bacteria. Brush your teeth for two minutes twice a day, and visit your dentist every six months for a checkup and pro cleaning.

Whitening:

Vancouver dentist Dr. Jeffrey Norden says tooth brightening is the cosmetic procedure patients ask for most. And they'd rather have it at his whitening spa than out of a box: “The Twitter generation doesn't want the hassle of doing it at home. They want it fast, and they want it now.” In-office treatments are tailored to the shape of each tooth, gums are protected and patients get a pre- and post-sensitivity treatment. Teeth will be six to 10 shades lighter. Cost at Norden's WestcoastSmile practice: \$399.

Veneers:

Hilary Duff and Miley Cyrus are just a couple of the many celebs who've opted for veneers. Made of a thin shell of light-reflecting porcelain and designed to fit perfectly, veneers close gaps, lengthen and reshape teeth and cover stains. Cosmetic dentist Dr. Brian Friedman suggests Emax veneers. “They're made of a much stronger porcelain than other veneer options,” he says. “It's also a very beautiful porcelain.” Veneers become a permanent part of your smile and don't require specialized care. Cost: \$1,500 per tooth.

Tooth bonding:

Bonding is less expensive than porcelain veneers, but it isn't as long lasting. But in the hands of a skilled dentist, the results can be almost as good says Norden. A composite resin is applied directly to teeth and is then sculpted to fill in gaps, improve shape and cover chips, cracks and stains. Bonding can last from four to 10 years, but will probably need maintenance during this time. Expect to pay between \$400 and \$750 per tooth.

TICKTOCK

The average times to complete today's most popular cosmetic procedures.

