

Porcelain Veneers

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Porcelain Veneers

Porcelain veneers are thin shells of porcelain that are bonded on to the front of your natural teeth enabling us to predictably change the shade of your teeth as well as correct mild to moderate misalignments, irregularities, crowding, and chipping.

Porcelain veneers are very biomimetic (i.e. mimic the properties of natural teeth such as appearance, strength and toughness) when bonded on to the enamel of your teeth.

Porcelain veneers are the 'gold standard' of aesthetic dentistry. Modern porcelains are indistinguishable from natural enamel and when bonded to enamel are as tough as enamel. They do not discolour and can be made to just about any shade.

How long will they last?

Whilst it is not possible to accurately predict survivability in individual cases the literature shows the 10 year survival rate of veneers to be very high ... around 90%.

Veneers are very durable when bonded onto enamel but not as predictable if bonded heavily to dentine. If it looks like a lot of tooth structure needs to be removed to get the cosmetic effect required (e.g. your teeth are very dark or very uneven and mis-placed) your dentist will discuss this with you. It may be your case is more suited to crowns or prior orthodontics.

What is the process?

After the initial assessment to determine suitability the dentist may suggest a trial diagnostic wax up. This lets you view the potential end result on a model to see if it is what you are after.

Once the decision is made to go ahead the teeth will usually need to be prepared (i.e. drilled). Sometimes no-preparation veneers can be used. Your dentist will let you know if this appropriate to your situation.

In most cases 0.5-2mm of tooth structure needs to be removed to make space for the overlying veneer. Once this is done the dentist gets some impressions and, depending on the case, puts some temporary veneers on the teeth.

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The impressions are sent to the dental technicians at the laboratory for the veneers to be made. In some instances we will need you to visit the lab at some point for the technicians to pick a shade for the veneers.

About 3 weeks later we get you back in and try in the veneers. If we are happy with the technical fit and you are happy with the appearance we bond the veneers on!

Limitations

As discussed porcelain veneers, when bonded to enamel, very closely match the physical properties of teeth. As such it is very unusual to break them apart from e.g. trauma.

As such we recommend a mouthguard is worn if playing contact sports and night time occlusal splint is made (and worn!) if you are a grinder.

Eventually they may get chipped or de-bond in which case it may be possible to re-bond them or a new veneer may need to be made.

Another potential issue in aesthetic cases is gum recession. Over time our gums do often recede slightly as we get older. This can be exacerbated by periodontal disease.

When veneers are initially placed the aim is to place the margins right at the gum margin in order to give a natural appearance. In time however, if gum recession occurs, the margin may become visible. This depends on a range of factors such as tooth position, the anatomy of your smile, the difference in shade between your veneer and the underlying tooth.

In that scenario, even though the veneer is technically and functionally fine, you may elect to replace it for better aesthetics. The good news is gum recession in healthy mouths is usually very slow. Also veneer margins are usually very difficult to see.

