

teeth

# a beautiful veneer

Porcelain veneers are the gold standard in bonding technology. Lise Taylor spoke with Sydney cosmetic dentist **Dr Michael Tam** about their effectiveness.



BEFORE



AFTER porcelain veneers by Dr Tam



BEFORE



AFTER porcelain veneers and in-chair tooth whitening by Dr Tam



BEFORE



AFTER porcelain veneers by Dr Tam

Veneers are made from either porcelain or tooth-coloured filling material and are designed to cover teeth that are stained or discoloured. Those made from porcelain are thin, semi-translucent facings and are bonded onto the front side of the teeth. Due to their natural appearance, versatility, durability and ability to bond well to the tooth structure, Dr Tam says porcelain veneers are the ultimate anterior restoration in most cases.

Porcelain veneers are not suitable for everyone, which is why a thorough consultation with your cosmetic dentist is essential.

Dr Tam says, 'The consultation comprises assessing all the areas that may impact on the desired outcome in achieving a beautiful smile – from attaining correct diagnostic records to utilising cosmetic digital imaging software to ensure patients are able to visualise the final result before starting treatment. It entails discussions about the smile the patient wants, treatment planning and explaining realistic outcomes. It also involves informing patients about what is actually involved in the procedure, scheduling requirements, costings, and the possible risks and complications.'

Dr Tam adds that this evaluation process is often what differentiates a good cosmetic dentist.

He explains that porcelain veneers are an ideal solution for minor tooth imperfections, chipped, worn or misshapen teeth, discoloured or stained fillings, naturally discoloured teeth and darkened teeth as a result of trauma.

'A relatively recent adjunct to cosmetic dentistry, porcelain veneers have two key advantages over other types of bonding. Firstly,

they are more translucent than other available bonding options such as tooth-coloured filling material. 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,' he says.

Porcelain veneers can last in excess of 10 years as long as they are well taken care of. Dr Tam says it is important to brush and floss daily to minimise decay, and to avoid grinding your teeth, biting your fingernails or biting on any hard objects as this can damage the veneers.

As much as porcelain veneers have many advantages, it is possible for them to break off (in which case a new one will have to be made) or simply come off (in this case it may be able to be cemented back on). It is also important that patients are aware this technique has a permanent effect on the original tooth in that the enamel has to be

trimmed from the tooth so the veneer can be fitted. It is therefore not a reversible procedure.

In certain situations, porcelain veneers are actually an inappropriate treatment. This includes when tooth structure has been lost and the tooth is therefore unstable or if there is an inadequate amount of enamel for veneers to be bonded onto. In addition, decay and active gum disease 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.

If you are unhappy with your teeth, porcelain veneers can be a simple solution. 'Improving your teeth can boost your confidence. It will improve your personal and professional relationships and can make a positive, powerful and memorable statement to everyone you meet,' Dr Tam concludes. **acsm**

## case study

Jennifer, 28, had always thought her teeth were too uneven. 'I had very small lateral teeth, which made my two front teeth appear larger and rather 'bucky' or protruding. This made me feel very self-conscious about my smile to the point where I would always cover my mouth when I laughed,' she says.

But it was when she started doing a lot of lecturing internationally in front of large groups of colleagues that she realised she needed to do something about it.

The work was performed from May to July this year and Jennifer's appointments were booked around her travel schedule. She says, 'Dr Tam and his staff were incredibly accommodating when it came to scheduling.'

Having contemplated having the work done for a few years she felt confident about the procedure and approached it more as an investment in her future. Jennifer found having the work done uncomfortable but says it was nothing beyond what she had expected.

Afterwards she was thrilled. 'It was amazing to feel and see my new smile,' she says. 'I have had numerous compliments from people about how wonderful my smile is since then. It has definitely given me the confidence to do well in my work. I no longer worry about how I look in my presentations but instead concentrate more on the content. Plus I laugh more freely and smile more often.'



BEFORE



AFTER porcelain veneers by Dr Tam



BEFORE



AFTER four porcelain veneers and in-chair tooth whitening by Dr Tam. Note: A well blended natural transition between natural tooth structure and porcelain has been achieved



BEFORE



AFTER porcelain veneers by Dr Tam