

10

the new

You!

Simple dental procedures yielding million-dollar smiles for patients

(Cont'd from Page 3)

Also available for a mouth makeover is the use of dental implants for people who have lost natural teeth. Implants are now the gold standard for people who are tired of dentures.

Instead of dentures and bridges, the toothless gap is filled by implanting a post or false root into the jawbone. This is then attached to a porcelain crown, rather than a plastic denture or bridge, which involves cutting into healthy teeth on either side to affix a replacement tooth.

"A false tooth or bridge can just snap on top of an implant and you can pop it out to clean it," Shah says. "You can get anything from six to eight implants into a jaw bone.

"And you no longer have to worry about dentures moving around. They are made of titanium and are very strong."

Implants are also very popular, especially with athletes such as hockey players who may have had their front teeth damaged. An implant can easily take a porcelain crown on top and restore a natural smile.

"They've actually been around for 40 years but are now becoming more popular,"

Shah says. "You still have to brush and floss them though."

Orthodontistry is also on the upswing, since braces for teeth straightening and alignment are now almost invisible, coming in clear plastic. Your mouth doesn't have to look like someone stuffed it with chicken wire.

Shah says many adults are included in the clientele, not just children.

"We've had people in their 50s and 60s using braces and they work for them."

the new **You!** 2007

Publisher Andrew S. Ritchie

Editor David Lee

Advertising Director Laurie Finley

National/Multi-Market Sales Manager

Dale Penner

Design Services Corinne Ball, Avenue 4 Group

Writers Peter Carlyle-Gordge, Michael Clark,
Margaret Anne Fehr, Liz Katynski,
Holli Moncrieff, Judy Owen

Photography Linda Wensel

the new You! 3

A reason to smile

Teeth whiteners and cosmetic dentistry can deliver 'oral attractiveness'

By Peter Carlyle-Gordge
For the Free Press

A bright smile is often the first thing we notice about people, and the sight of a mouthful of yellowed, crooked teeth is hardly the way to win friends and influence people.

Winnipeg dentist Dr. Parresh Shah of the Westwood Dental Centre says he's seen a steady increase in people seeking to improve their oral attractiveness.

Shah sees models and others in the public eye, but many are younger professionals who think a nice smile and white teeth will help their career advancement. Others are aging babyboomers who want to make the best of their appearance.

By far the most common procedure is tooth whitening; it's relatively simple and you don't have to spend thousands of dollars," he says.

"We custom make a special mouth tray and prepare a solution or gel. The client can wear it at home, whether when sleeping or during the daytime."

Kits for such bleaching or whitening can also be bought at drug stores, but dentists caution it's important to have the right mix of bleaching agent and a customized tray.

Bleaching can be abrasive and cause mouth ulcers or gum damage. If a gel is badly applied, it can also lead to painful, bleeding gums and patchy teeth.

Shah says bleaching effectiveness depends on many factors, including whether you smoke or drink tea, coffee and wine. Age and general health can also determine how much whiter you can get your teeth.

The dentist says a typical cost is \$250 to \$300. He also encourages regular touch ups or maintenance, noting that a bleaching should be good for nine months to a year.

An even faster treatment

"People may be going to a wedding or graduation and they can do a touch-up by using the tray of gel for a day or two."

More powerful bleaching sessions can also be performed in the dental office, with costs running \$400 to \$500. Rapid whitening sessions provide an advanced bleaching

process which takes an hour or more.

The dentist applies whitening solution and a plasma light or laser, which speeds up the process, is shone onto the teeth.

Another vital tool of cosmetic dentistry today is the use of bonded porcelain veneers – a thin eggshell porcelain shell is basically glued to the front of a tooth.

"It makes the tooth look much whiter and is very strong. It can only be used if the underlying tooth and gum are healthy,

And it can only be done on people over the age of 18, because your tooth may change below that age."

Porcelain veneers have to be specially made and the underlying tooth must have very shallow grooving made on it to ensure the veneer bonds well. Costs can range from \$700 to \$1,000 per tooth.

For even more money, you can use a new product called a lumineer.

"The advantage is that you don't need to do any preparation on the tooth below, but they are not suitable for everyone," Shah says.

(Cont'd on Page 10)



FREE PRESS PHOTO BY LINDA WENSEL
Dr. Parresh Shah says today's dentistry can quickly give patients a brilliant smile.