

Tooth Tips

# "THE SMILE THAT BONDS"

As you earnestly pursue your fresh list of resolutions, have you given thought to your oral health, especially your smile?

The Smile That Bonds alludes to the fact that "ties that bind" are usually accompanied with a smile. Are you happy with, and confident of, your smile?

As a dentist, one of my greatest joys is the privilege of helping someone restore or enhance their smile. Some examples: One client recently had extensive bonding work performed to restore function and appearance to her smile. Later she attended a school reunion, and one of her long lost admirers commented to her about how youthful she looked, and how dazzling her smile was! Their subsequent "catching up" has led to a serious new relationship for which she is grateful, and happy about. A young gentleman had been self-conscious about his smile for his entire life, due to asymmetrical gaps and spacing. After bonding to restore and enhance his smile, his newfound confidence led to a promotion at work and a new romantic relationship (please note: I am not saying dental restoration will lead to a new life, or winning the lotto, etc... simply that smile improvement can be an important part of a self-improvement regimen, which can lead to other things...).

For those ready to explore the possibility of smile enhancement, there are a range of new innovative products available. Least costly processes are bleaching, and a newer system called "Snap-On-Smile". Bleaching options range from store bought products like white strips, to custom made bleach trays, or in office treatments. Snap on Smile is a branded system whereby a dental lab makes a set of ideal looking teeth to fit over the existing teeth, which can be inserted and removed as needed.

Most costly processes would involve porcelain crowns or veneers to be fixed to the teeth by the dentist. These will be considered the "gold standard" of options, however, some patients object to the cost, and the fact that often the teeth must be ground down to make room for the porcelain to fit. A newer product on the market called Lumineers is available;

they are very thin veneers which can be fixed over the teeth with minimal grinding, in some cases.

Composite bonding techniques offer a middle-of-the-road option for many, where simple to complex problems can be solved for less cost than porcelain, often with much less grinding of the natural tooth surfaces. SmileBond Systems is a patented process which allows the dentist to restore multiple teeth quickly and efficiently using an injection mold system. Bonding is nice because it is repairable, has excellent durability and can be converted to porcelain at any time in the future if desired.

Which ever option you choose, be sure to take good care of your investment with regular professional exams and good oral hygiene techniques. Also remember that no dental restoration is as good as a natural tooth which has never been restored. As such, any dental restoration may need to be repaired or replaced in your lifetime. Careful home and professional oral hygiene practices will ensure that you receive the maximum lifespan of any chosen restoration.

So, resolve to improve your smile this year, and remember, A Smile that Bonds goes hand in hand with Ties that Bind.

Happy New Year, and here's hoping that 2011 will be truly Happy and Prosperous for all!



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