

## Veneers

This information sheet is made to help you understand what veneers are, what the procedure involves and how they may benefit you, and the risks involved. For more information please ask any member of the Smileworks team.

### What is a veneer?

A veneer is a thin layer of porcelain made to fit over the front surface of a tooth, very much like a false fingernail fits over a nail. Sometimes a natural colour composite material is used instead of porcelain.

A precise shape and shade of porcelain can be chosen to lighten the upper front teeth or to reshape them. It can make a chipped tooth look intact again - the material covers the whole of the front of the tooth replacing the broken part.

### What do Veneers do?

Veneers can improve the colours, shape and position of teeth, and protect teeth from further damage caused by acid in foods and drinks or from acids in the stomach. Without the protection of a veneer the teeth can become thin and weak.

### How are teeth prepared for a Veneer?

Some of the outer enamel surface of the tooth may be removed, to ensure that the veneer can be bonded to the tooth permanently. The amount of enamel to be removed is minimal and will be the thickness of the veneers to be fitted.

The tooth is prepared in two stages. The first stage will involve removing a small amount of enamel and taking an impression of the tooth. The impression is sent to the laboratory where they will reproduce a veneer to fit the tooth. We will place a temporary veneer on the tooth to protect it against sensitivity. A visit to the laboratory is essential to make sure the colour is matching the adjoining teeth and will look natural. The second stage will involve placing the veneers on the required teeth with a bonding material. A veneer can be placed in less than a week.

Sometimes veneers can be placed without preparing the tooth. These are called prep-less veneers and do not alter the natural tooth surface before being bonded on. In the case of composite veneers, these often do not require tooth preparation and can be bonded on in-office without the need for the veneer to be made in a lab. This means composite veneers can be made in one day.



### **How long do Veneers last?**

Veneers can last for some years but they can chip or break, just as your own teeth can. People who grind their teeth or clench put more stress on the teeth and the veneers and the life span will be shorter.

### **What happens after a veneer is fitted?**

Some minor adjustments might be needed to make sure that your bite is correct. We would like to recall you one week after to make sure you are happy with the fit and function of the new veneer.

### **Benefits of Veneers**

Patients with porcelain veneers enjoy benefits including:

- An enhanced and more aesthetically pleasing smile
- A natural-looking alternative to other types of restorations
- Stain resistance
- Resilience of porcelain, which is more durable than composite resin
- "Instant" orthodontics, as veneers can cover teeth that are misaligned or uneven
- No downtime
- Durability, depending on how well you look after them

### **Risks of Veneers**

Risks associated with veneers are minor and quite rare. Tooth sensitivity to heat or cold is the most common side effect patients may experience, and typically lasts between three and six months.

Poorly fitting veneers can change a patient's bite alignment and may cause discomfort and teeth grinding. Our dentists are highly experienced in planning and performing treatment using veneers, which minimises these already minor risks.

It is also important to understand that veneers must eventually be replaced. Although they are durable, they will not last forever. With regular check-ups, hygiene appointments and dedicated daily brushing and flossing, you can expect your veneers to last several years. Composite veneers can last around 3-5 years, whereas we would expect porcelain veneers to last about 10 years.

### **Are you a candidate for Veneers?**

If you are interested in porcelain veneers, our dentists will evaluate your medical history, current dental health, and the condition of your tooth enamel to determine if you are a good candidate. Typically, patients who want veneers should:

- Be in good oral and overall health.
- Have a sufficient amount of healthy tooth enamel. If you lack sufficient enamel for veneers to bond to your teeth, you may need an alternate procedure such as dental crowns to replace veneers.
- Be committed to proper oral hygiene.
- Understand that the procedure requires permanent alteration of the tooth

Even if you have tooth decay or gum disease, you may qualify for veneers after our doctors treat these issues. Some patients who grind their teeth may not be candidates for veneers due to the pressure that grinding places on the teeth. If you decide to receive porcelain veneers, you should be committed to scheduling routine cleanings and exams, as well as practicing good oral hygiene at home.