

The Facts about

Dental Veneers



Dentists developed dental veneers as an alternative to dental crowns. They are extremely thin. They don't cover the entire tooth above the gum line, just the front part, and they were specifically designed to help patients with the following problems:

- ▶ Slightly crooked teeth.
- ▶ Worn, chipped, or poorly shaped teeth with craters or bulges.
- ▶ Uneven spacing and gaps between the teeth.
- ▶ Noticeable discoloration, such as teeth that are naturally yellow or gray and that cannot be bleached.

Teeth can be stained for a number of different reasons; for example, sometimes a root canal can leave you with a stained tooth. You can also get a stained tooth if you've had too much fluoride, if you've had drugs such as tetracycline, or if the dentist has applied resin veneers and they have been stained.

In order to get veneers of any kind, your teeth must be healthy. You cannot apply them over cavities, and they should also not be used if you have untreated periodontal disease. You should not get veneers if you have a problem with clenching or grinding, and once you have them, you should not bite your nails or chew on any hard objects such as ice or a pencil.

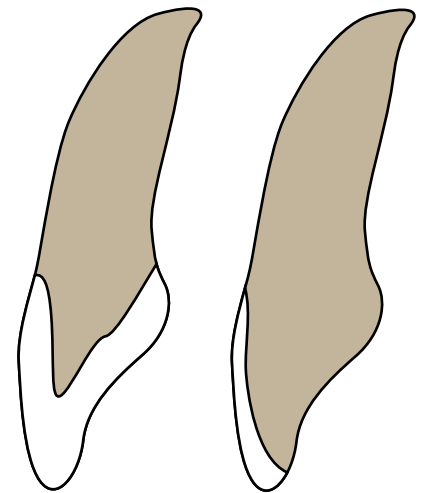
Your dentist has a choice between two different types of dental veneers, depending on what your needs are:

- ▶ **Laminates, porcelain, or ceramic veneers:** These replace the natural enamel on the tooth. A dentist takes off about half a millimeter of the enamel so that the finished tooth will have the same look, bulk, and feel as the original tooth, decides on the shade that will match the original teeth most closely, and makes an impression of the teeth. Although some enamel is irreversibly removed, it is not as much as it would be if you were to get a complete crown on one or more teeth. The impression is then sent to a dental laboratory that uses it as a mold for individual ceramic veneers. The dentist places the veneers on the teeth during a second visit and makes any necessary adjustments. After cleaning the teeth, the veneers are then bonded to the teeth with dental cement. If necessary, more adjustments can be made at a later time.
- ▶ **Resin-based composite veneers:** The dentist prepares and, if necessary, reshapes the

tooth, selects a color for the composite that will match the original teeth, then adds the composite material to the tooth. Once the composite is in place, a light is used to harden it. The dentist polishes the hardened composite so it will look like the original tooth.

Both kinds have advantages. A ceramic veneer looks more like original enamel than the composite would, especially in the light, and is less likely to stain than a resin. Resin veneers are even thinner than ceramic ones, and don't require the removal of as much enamel.

Dental veneers can show wear, and they can be dislodged. As a result, you should understand that you may need to go through the process more than once. Otherwise, however, maintenance consists of nothing other than what you would do routinely: regular exams that include professional cleaning, brushing, flossing, and mouthwash.



Crown

Veneer

If you are interested in the benefits of getting a veneer, start by talking with our office so we can determine whether a veneer would work for you.