

TEETHING TROUBLE

We're not all born with a perfect smile, but with the latest cosmetic dentistry you can buy yourself one – even if you're already long in the tooth...

Our expert: Dr Uchenna Okoye BDS has perfected the smile of many a celeb – contact her at Gloucester Road Smile Centre (www.londonsmiling.com, 020 7373 3744)



Before

After

Problem: Buck teeth

Solution: Braces are the most simple option. 'Protruding teeth tend to go back quite quickly,' says Uchenna. 'Veneers can slightly correct buck teeth, but if they need to be tucked back quite a lot, the client will need a crown. This involves drilling away both the front and back surface of the tooth, then slipping the new porcelain crown over the top, rather like a thimble.' If the goofiness is caused by a protruding jaw, surgery may be the only option. 'I'd work with an oral surgeon to discuss how the jaw would be reshaped – we might need to do some veneers after the surgery.'

Time: 6-18 months for braces, 2 weeks for crowns or veneers. Surgery would depend on the individual case

Cost: Braces from £6,000, veneers/crowns from £5,000, surgery £10,000-plus

Problem: Crooked teeth

Solution: 'Adults can opt for lingual braces that are worn behind the teeth, or Invisalign – clear plastic gum shields that are custom-moulded and changed regularly as the teeth straighten,' says Uchenna. 'For an instant result, veneers are the answer. A veneer is a thin porcelain shell that fits over the front of the tooth after some of the enamel has been drilled off.'

Time: Braces 9-36 months, veneers 2 weeks

Cost: Braces from £6,000, veneers from £5,000



Before

After

Before



After

Problem: Big gums

Solution: 'First, laser is used to trim away the excess gum tissue under local anaesthetic,' says Uchenna. 'You may then need veneers or bonding to even out the old tooth surface and the newly exposed area. If veneers are required, the dentist may decide to wait for a few weeks to fit the final ones, as the gums may shrink further as they heal.'

Time: Up to 6 weeks

Cost: From £150 per tooth for laser gum trimming, veneers from £700 per tooth

Problem: Stained teeth

Solution: First-line treatment is whitening with hydrogen peroxide, either at the dentist's or with a dentist-supplied kit at home. If you want to go brighter, you'll have to cover the front of the tooth with a white resin (bonding) or veneers.

Time: In-chair whitening 1 hour, DIY kit 2-3 weeks, bonding 2 hours, veneers 2 weeks

Cost: From £600 for in-chair whitening, from £250 for DIY kit, from £200 per tooth for bonding and from £700 per tooth for veneers



Before

After

Before



After

Problem: Missing tooth

Solution: Two options. 'You can fill the gap with a bridge, which is a crown with the false tooth attached. The crown sits over the tooth next to the gap,' says Uchenna. 'A newer option is a tooth implant, where you drill a titanium screw into the jawbone. A temporary tooth is put on the end of the screw then, once the healing is complete, the final new tooth is attached.'

Time: 2 weeks for a crown, 6 months for a tooth implant

Cost: Bridge from £2,000, implant from £5,000

CELEBRITY SMILE CLINIC We ask Uchenna what she'd do with this lot...



Madonna

'I wouldn't want to touch her gap because I think it's part of her. If she insisted, I could close it and also make her rather long front teeth shorter with veneers, but all I'd really want to do is whiten her teeth, as they are looking slightly yellow.'



Kate Moss

'Kate's such an icon, she can get away with anything. But if you look closely, her lateral incisors (the ones next to her front teeth) are very small, so she has a gappy smile. It would be a very simple job to fill those spaces with veneers.'



Amy Winehouse

'This gap needs closing – she's no Madonna. Amy's teeth are gappy, protruding and long, which gives her a horsey look. I'd put about 10 veneers on to make them straight, shorter, and more feminine. Her bottom teeth could do with bleaching, too.'



Cheryl Tweedy

'She's so pretty, but spoilt by her teeth. One of her lateral incisors is pointed and she has a "buckle corridor", where the teeth at the corners of the mouth can't be seen. I'd give her 12 veneers to give her a lovely, wide smile and get rid of that pointy tooth.'



Jamie Oliver

'He hardly ever smiles in pictures, and there's a reason. He has very small teeth that are all over the place and there's a gap on one upper side. First, I'd get him to wear braces, then fit six to 10 veneers to make his teeth longer, squarer and more manly.'



Tony Blair

'Oh dear! His gums are red and swollen, and are much higher over his eye teeth. I'd probably trim the gum above his four front teeth. His front tooth is twisted and his bottom set crowded. He should wear braces if he didn't want the perfect look of veneers.'