



YES, YOU NEED A SPECIALIST

There's a good chance that the guy who does your cleanings isn't the right person to redesign your mouth. What to look for when selecting a doc.

Credentials Are a Must

"Cosmetic dentistry isn't a board specialty, so not everyone has the right education," says Jack Ringer, a cosmetic dentist in Anaheim, California. "About 30 percent of my practice is redoing bad dental work." Check for accreditations from associations like the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry. While not recognized by the American Dental Association, "the accreditation is held in high regard by the dental community as an accurate barometer of training in the fundamentals of cosmetic dentistry," Ringer says.

Ask for Examples

A good cosmetic dentist will have pictures and video of the work he did—just as a reputable plastic surgeon would. Be wary of a dentist who only offers up examples from generic books.

Name-Check His Education

If you need a dramatic overhaul, such as a full-mouth reconstruction or crowns and bridges on top of implants, seek out a dental subspecialist, like a prosthodontist. "It's a combination of aesthetics and biology," says Manhattan aesthetic dentist Jonathan B. Levine. "Changing the length or width of a tooth can affect bite and therefore function."

TEST-DRIVE YOUR TEETH

Three new ways to try on your smile before you buy.

1 VIRTUAL REALITY "Women come in saying, 'Make me look like so-and-so female celebrity,'" says Kevin B. Sands, a cosmetic dentist who's worked on Robert Downey Jr. and Joe Manganiello. "Men don't seem to care. They just say, 'Make me look better.'" That's a mistake: Be specific about what you like and offer examples, then discuss how your dentist can customize that look for you. Many use computer simulations to demonstrate how a grin would look with your features (face size, shape, and bone structure all have an effect); then you can tweak it until it's right.

2 FREE SAMPLE For no extra charge, many dentists will create a thin mock-up, like a mouthpiece, that fits over your teeth and lasts a few days before it cracks—enough time for you to judge your friends' (and your own) reactions. "We want to make sure the patient likes how the teeth look and function," Jack Ringer says.

3 CHAIRSIDE SERVICE Many doctors, including Sands, staff an "in-house ceramist," who, after veneers are inserted, works on them for hours painting desired changes—like calcium spots or translucent edges—directly onto the porcelain.

THE CASE FOR ADULT BRACES

The number of post-pubescent men opting for orthodontia has grown 29 percent since 2010. Why would any right-minded, self-respecting grown-up spend the money and risk the embarrassment of aligning his teeth with wire when porcelain is quick and easy? Sometimes teeth are so bad they can't be corrected otherwise. "The greater the complications, like repositioning teeth rather than rotating them,

the more likely fixed braces are needed," says Morris Poole, a Utah-based orthodontist. Is it worth it? Will Smith, an internist, talks about embracing the tween accessory on the cusp of middle age.

"In my mid-thirties, my dentist told me something frightening: My bite was so off that only five of my teeth touched, which could lead to lost bone mass—and lost teeth. If I didn't want to accept premature dentures, braces were the only solution. I resisted spending the time and money, but my wife spent two years pushing me. Finally, I gave in.

"In the weeks following, I stared at my smile in the mirror. Every day. It was

unsettling. But within weeks, I could see the teeth moving—and then it became, strangely, kind of gratifying.

"My front teeth have porcelain brackets, so they're not that noticeable. Still, I'm eager to get them off. It's taken three years and a jaw surgery to get to where I am today—41 with a few months left to endure. There is one bright side to having braces: I can commiserate with my 12-year-old son over the difficulties of flossing."



Forty-three percent of men would fix crooked teeth with braces over clear aligners or veneers.

Sixty-six percent of women would date a metal-mouth, but 72 percent won't let him down there.

According to respondents, Bradley Cooper and Scarlett Johansson have the sexiest smiles.