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## **Beautify Your Lips... at the Dentist!**



Full lips are considered sensual and youthful. No wonder lip augmentation has become a popular cosmetic procedure. Plastic surgeons have traditionally injected patients with fat, collagen, and even freeze-dried cadaver skin to enlarge their lips and smooth smile line wrinkles.

Modern cosmetic dentistry now offers a way to beautify your lips without injections, incisions or grafts. No fat, no collagen and no cadaver skin is implanted. Best of all, your teeth are revamped during the same procedure!

### **Lip/Teeth Relationship:**

Dental lip enhancement procedures work on the same basic principal as many other cosmetic treatments. Underlying structure is enlarged in order to change the appearance of the surface. Teeth support the lips. Recall the hollow cheeks, wrinkled skin, and sunken lips that result when an individual has no teeth or dentures? Enhancing teeth can make the lips appear larger. Support for lips is created by proper tooth arrangement.

Generally, a perfect smile exposes nearly all maxillary central incisors (upper front) to the gingival line exposing the tips of the papillae. If this technical jargon has you confused, just visualize your favorite cover model. Many of them have smiles that fit this description. An accomplished cosmetic dentist will review oral frame proportions including the smile line, high lip line, lip in repose (at rest), perioral (around the mouth) tissue mobility, facial proportions, and other factors. These considerations are necessary to ensure that the lips and teeth compliment facial features without dominating overall appearance. Lips that are proportionally over-enlarged are distracting.

### **Treatment Options:**

Dental lip enhancements can be performed by changing the orientation of teeth through orthodontics or by changing the shape of the front teeth through restorative treatments like porcelain crowns or veneers.

Orthodontists use braces or retainers to physically move teeth. Treatment can take months or years to complete, depending on various factors. If your teeth are crooked and your lips are thinner than you'd like, orthodontics may be the ideal "two-in-one" treatment for you.

Restorative dental lip enhancement using crowns and/or veneers can be used to change the appearance of the teeth and lips after only a few appointments. Tooth-colored crowns, made of porcelain, produce new surfaces over the entire tooth. Veneers are affixed only to the front of the tooth surface. Some tooth structure must be removed to place crowns and veneers.

Porcelain crowns and veneers are strong and reliable. They look very natural and attractive. Crowns or veneers make crooked teeth look straight, restore stained teeth to their natural white shade, and provide improved lip support. This treatment can make naturally thin or aged lips appear young and full.

### **Longevity:**

Orthodontic tooth alteration is essentially permanent if a retainer is worn as prescribed. Porcelain crowns and veneers may last over ten years. In most cases, they can also be replaced if they break or wear. These are advantages over collagen-injection lip enhancements since collagen can resorb (break down and be assimilated by the body) after only two months.