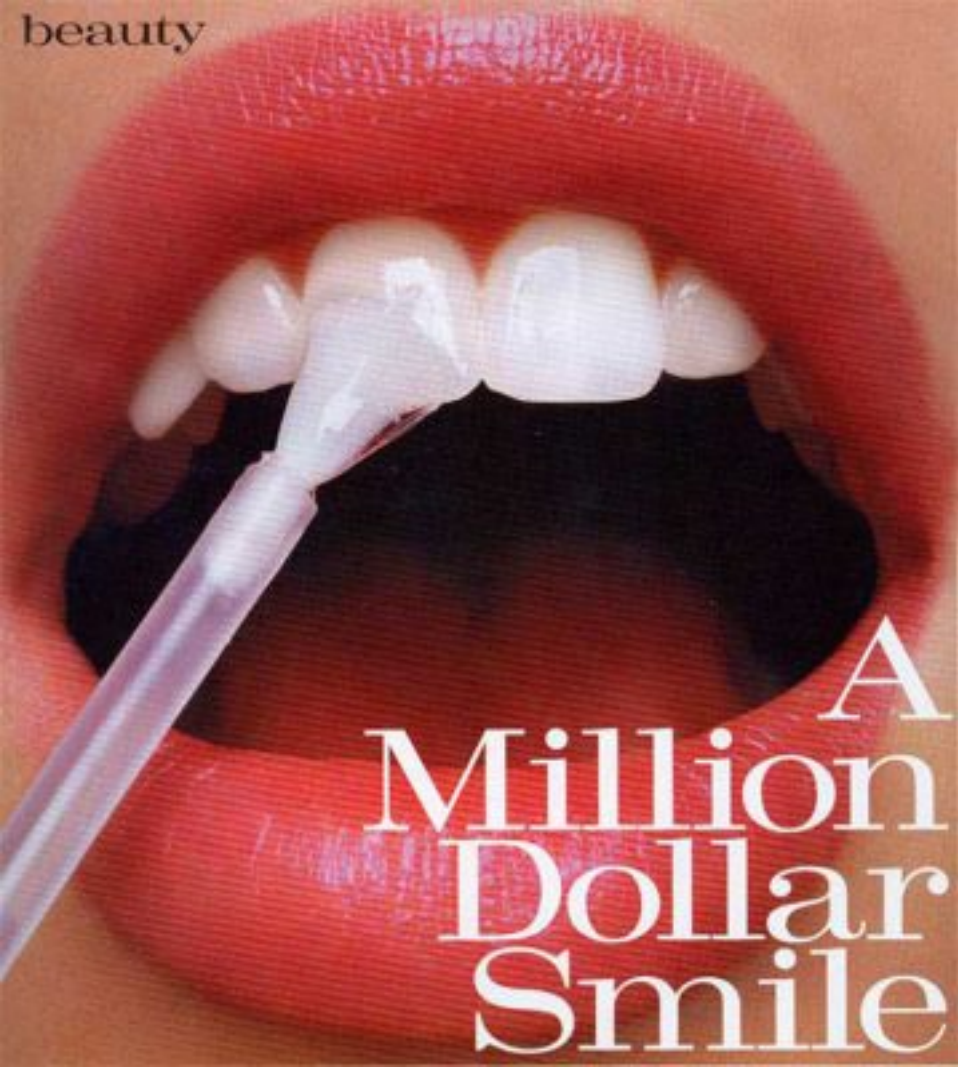


beauty



A
Million
Dollar
Smile



Star grins: Cute and crooked to glistening perfection



of cosmetic-dentistry patients, made up of early-adopter business types (you need a killer smile to close killer deals, after all), has expanded to become a diverse group, the only commonality being that they all want to improve their look. "Your smile is your calling card. It says so much about you."

With a core clientele of women in the 30-45 age range (although his patients run the gamut from young women in their late teens to active seniors in their 70s), Dr. Soll says there is an increasing

number of adults who are updating their smiles. In 2004 (the most recent year for which stats are available), the American Association of Orthodontists reported that almost 63,000 Canadian adults were undergoing "active" orthodontic treatment—mostly braces, despite the up-to-\$10,000 price tag—while others were covering recessed, chipped or fanged teeth with porcelain veneers.

And whitening? Think of it as the new gold rush. It's the number-one-requested cosmetic-dentistry procedure, says Dr. Wayne Halstrom, president of the Canadian Dental Association. Eleven percent of Canadians underwent whitening procedures at their dentists' office last year, and research done by Crest indicates that Canadians spent approximately \$41 million on over-the-counter whitening kits in 2006.

My long story short: at 31 years old, the braces went on. I decided that old-school metal train tracks were the way to go—and I had some wicked fun flaunting my "grillz" at the office. A year later—voilà!—straight teeth. Three weeks of nighttime whitening followed, and now I've got a lot to smile about, but this time, I'm not embarrassed to.

Craving your own smile make-over? Here are some common complaints and their best fixes

Problem: crooked, uneven, recessed teeth

Solution: Options include traditional metal braces, lingual braces affixed to the interior side of teeth and clear Invisalign tooth aligners. Or, for a quick-change effect, try veneers.

How they work: Braces and tooth aligners exert constant pressure on teeth, guiding them into correct alignment. For metal braces (regular or lingual), the arch wires are replaced every 4-8 weeks or so. Invisalign's tooth aligners are replaced approximately every two weeks and are best suited to minor misalignment. (More on veneers later.)

Time commitment: from weeks (for

veneers) to 1-3 years (for braces or tooth aligners)

Approximate cost: \$2,400-\$10,000+

Ouch factor: low to high (usually after a more rigid arch wire is inserted, but the pain is temporary)

Problem: gappy front teeth or Dracula cuspids

Solution: Firstly, many regard gappy front teeth as beautiful, not flawed (think Lauren Hutton and current runway star Lara Stone). But, if you insist, close the gap with porcelain veneers. Mildly pointy cuspids can be reshaped with a drill; more serious cases are covered with veneers.

How they work: Veneers are like tiny individual porcelain shields cemented over top of your real teeth, filling gaps, covering pointy cuspids or hiding discoloured or pitted teeth. They're custom-formed and tinted for a natural-looking match.

Time commitment: several appointments within a few weeks of each other

Approximate cost: \$800-\$2,000 per veneer, but cost can vary with quality, so speak to your dentist about all the fees involved. Approximately \$100 for minor cuspid reshaping.

Ouch factor: minimal

Problem: stained, discoloured teeth

Solution: in-office tooth-whitening systems such as Zoom, or at-home whitening systems or strips

How they work: Many think the most effective route is at the dentist, using a system such as Zoom, which involves the application of a bleaching gel onto the teeth, which are then subjected to a special light, delivering dramatic whitening in less than two hours. DIY systems, on the other hand, use custom-fitted trays you fill with a bleaching agent and wear for a couple of hours or overnight during treatment (typical treatment periods last from 2-4 weeks). Finally, at-home disposable whitening strips or brush-on whitening solutions are worn on teeth for periods ranging from five minutes to a couple of hours a day.

Time commitment: Zoom delivers immediate results—and impressive ones at that. At-home whitening systems yield results within a few days of treatment.

Approximate cost: DIY whitening >

kits start at \$20; dentist-provided trays and bleaching agent range from \$250–\$450; and in-office whitening, such as Zoom, starts at \$600.

Ouch factor: zero to moderate, depending on how sensitive your teeth and gums are (discomfort is temporary, though)

Problem: big filling, broken tooth or root canal

Solution: Veneers can hide a chipped tooth or visible dark filling, while a crown will protect and camouflage a fragile and discoloured root-canal site.

How they work: Crowns are similar to veneers in that they are customized to your teeth, then cemented into place. Unlike veneers, however, crowns cover the entire tooth.

Time commitment: several appointments within a few weeks of each other

Approximate cost: \$1,000–\$1,800 per crown

Ouch factor: minimal

For tips on how to find a dentist, visit The Canadian Dental Association's website (www.cda-adc.ca) or, to find an orthodontist, visit the Canadian Association of Orthodontists (www.cao-aco.org).

FLARE tests the latest in at-home tooth whitening

■ REMBRANDT ADVANCED WHITENING STRIPS, \$40.

Hate the peroxide taste and post-whitening drip of most strips? Beauty intern Roshel Karu says that, thanks to the nice, snug fit, "you can barely taste anything, and it's not messy at all." **The one drawback:** "You have to leave it on for 30 minutes," although only once a day. **Perfect for:** Deep stains. It's powered-up to deliver dramatic results.

■ Whiten every day for five minutes with CREST WHITESTRIPS DAILY MULTICARE, \$50.

Associate editor Karen Kwan says, "Five minutes fly by, so it's superconvenient." She noticed whiter teeth in just two weeks. **The one drawback:** "Quite a bit of product remains, so always rinse with water after." **Perfect for:** Sensitive teeth and gums. The low dose of peroxide makes it less intense than other treatments.

■ GOSMILE ADVANCED FORMULA B1 TOOTH WHITENING ON-THE-GO, \$120.

Using the handy single-dose ampoule with built-in brush, "I just swiped it on my teeth after brushing and went to bed," says beauty director Juliette Lie. Use it twice a day and you'll see results in just a week. **The one drawback:** "It's pricey." **Perfect for:** Anyone in a hurry. There's no rinsing and you can even tote it in your purse for on-the-go brightening. *For where-to-buy, see Stylesource.*

PUCKER UP—AND PAY UP!

You'll have to pay for cosmetic dentistry out of your own little Louis Vuitton wallet, with the exception of braces, which are covered by many employee dental plans (one of the reasons behind the boom in adult orthodontics, say doctors Soll and Halstrom). Once you've got a treatment estimate, have your dentist's office contact your insurance provider to see how much of the treatment is covered. If you have enough money to pay for your procedure outright, stop reading and book that appointment. But, if you don't, ask your dentist's office about payment options. Many will allow you to pay in installments over the course of your treatment.