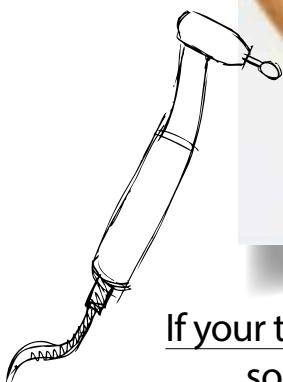
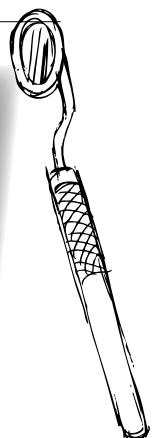


HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR SMILE

6 questions to ask your dentist



If your teeth are causing you concern or embarrassment, you'll find effective solutions here. Patricia Flokis seeks advice from the dental experts

Is a gummy smile or stained teeth affecting your self-confidence? With the right advice and treatment, a perfect smile can be yours. Here, top dentists answer your most common questions.

Q I'd like to straighten my teeth, but I'm embarrassed to have braces as an adult. What do you suggest?

"Today people see adults wearing braces as doing something proactive for their oral health. Having straight teeth and a better bite means less wear, cracking or damage of teeth, fewer fillings throughout your life and healthier jaw joints in later life. Straighter teeth are also easier to keep clean, and cleaner teeth can mean less chance of gum disease and dental decay.

"There are many options available that are more subtle including clear external braces, lingual or internal braces, and clear aligners, also known as Invisalign. Speak to an orthodontist to discuss which treatment best suits you, your budget and lifestyle."

Dr Kia Pajouhesh, dentist and managing director of Smile Solutions in Melbourne.

Q I have a gummy smile. Can I fix it?

"Yes, a procedure called crown lengthening or gum re-contouring can correct a gummy smile. It involves removing excess gum tissue,

either with a scalpel or a laser. It is often performed by a periodontist and can be done on one or more teeth or even a gum line. Often it will require some bone removal as well. The periodontist will measure how much bone you have under the gum and make a calculation on how much they can afford to remove in order to improve the appearance of your smile, without compromising the support of the teeth."

Dr Peter Alldritt, chair of the Oral Health Committee, Australian Dental Association.

Q I have a missing tooth. What are my options?

"Dental implants have evolved over the last 30 years into an incredibly predictable treatment option for missing teeth. A dental implant is a titanium tooth root that is placed into the jawbone and then fitted with a crown. The advantage of an implant is that, like a natural tooth, it's an independent structure so it's easier to floss and keep clean than a dental bridge. A dental bridge is another option used to replace missing teeth but it also requires cutting down

often healthy, undamaged teeth on either side of the missing tooth. If the teeth on either side of the missing tooth are worn down, broken or decayed, a bridge may be a better choice than an implant."

Dr Markijan Hupalo, prosthodontist and director of Sydney Prosthodontics.



Q I have stained teeth. Will teeth whitening help?

"Teeth whitening performed by a dentist can be a safe and effective way to remove stains and discolouration caused by the natural ageing process, smoking and foods such as tea, coffee and red wine. It can be done in the surgery in an hour. Or your dentist can make bleaching trays for you to wear at home for one or two hours at a time over a week or so until the desired shade is achieved.

"Teeth whitening isn't suitable for everybody. Stains caused by medications, particularly antibiotics taken in childhood, are almost impossible to remove. Greyish teeth are also more resistant to teeth whitening. And bleaching agents will not lighten fillings, veneers or crowns.

"For many people though, having a scale and clean can remove most stains."

Dr Peter Alldritt



Q Is it possible to improve my smile by changing the shape of my teeth without damaging them?

"Porcelain veneers can be used to change the size, shape or colour of teeth. They're thin custom-made shells which are bonded to the front of teeth. They work best for people with heavily restored or broken-down teeth or those with extreme staining, but will need to be replaced on average every eight to 12 years at considerable cost."

Dr Kia Pajouhesh