

Contouring and shaping your teeth

Enhancing your smile: Contouring and shaping teeth

What's one of the first things you notice when you meet someone new? It's often the person's smile. Teeth that look clean, even and healthy help make a positive impression. If your smile reveals chipped or irregularly shaped teeth, your dentist can provide several options to make it more attractive while protecting your oral health. Tooth contouring and reshaping are simple procedures often used to correct minor flaws and problems such as teeth that are chipped or oddly shaped.

Contouring and shaping are used to smooth out irregular edges and angles of teeth. These procedures, sometimes called enamel shaping, slenderizing or stripping, allow for subtle, minor alterations to the length, shape or position of teeth. Teeth that are uneven or overlapping may also benefit from this treatment.

Your dentist gently sculpts the teeth to artfully eliminate or minimize imperfections = and create a smile that makes a lasting impression.

What's Involved?

Tooth contouring and reshaping are quick procedures with very little, if any, discomfort. Anesthetics usually are not required and the entire process may take one to three visits. Because some tooth enamel is removed during the process, your dentist may take an x-ray to determine the size and location of the tooth's pulp. The dentist may mark the tooth before removing a tiny amount of surface enamel with a hand piece. Abrasive strips may be used to even tooth enamel on the sides of the teeth before they are smoothed and polished.

Along with tooth reshaping and contouring, your dentist may suggest other procedures to correct or cosmetically improve your teeth. These treatments include dental veneers, (thin pieces of specially shaped porcelain or resin that are applied to the front of prepared teeth). Bonding, a thick tooth-colored resin, may also be recommended to correct flaws on front teeth.

Keep in mind that these treatments cannot solve all dental problems. Crowded teeth, for example, may need braces. If so, your dentist may provide treatment or may refer you to an orthodontist. Teeth that are very uneven or badly chipped may need other restorative treatment to correct the problem.

If your smile could use A BOOST, talk to your dentist about your options