

Discover the 7 Keys to a Natural Confident Smile

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Do you want to smile more confidently? Do you remember times in your life where you were conscious of your smile? Whether you're on a first date or it's your wedding day, it could be a job interview that launches your career, or all the fabulous occasions that make you want to smile. It's times like this that your smile matters.



A confident, healthy smile is a smile that lights up a room. It's warm and engaging and can put people at ease and can lift the mood in tense situations. When you look back at pictures of the events of your life, do you see a vibrant, confident smile reflected back at you?

Feeling self conscious about your smile can significantly impact your personal and professional life. Before I discuss the 7 keys to a natural confident smile I'd like to share with you my journey.

To me dentistry always seemed natural career path for me to pursue. I wanted a career where you get to interact with people on a personal level everyday and help improve their lives in a small way. I have established some great friendships with people of all ages and helped people through some challenging situations.

Growing up my mum had a number of problems with her teeth. I remember going with her to the dentist and I was fascinated by what our dentist could do to help people. I saw how appreciative my mum was to have her problems resolved and I felt it would be rewarding if I could help people in a same way.

I've been a dentist for 7 years and I've seen that many people are very nervous about going to the dentist, perhaps because of a traumatic experience or just that dentistry traditionally was not particularly pleasant. Throughout my dental career I have always focused on quality dental care. I understand that dentistry can seem scary, especially for children and I've always devoted time to helping people overcome their anxiety about dentistry.

When you step into our office at Vivid Dental you will see that we have designed our practice to make you feel relaxed and comfortable. We aim to help you feel in control of your dental care and a part of the process towards improving your teeth.

I get asked a lot of different questions about dentistry but what I hear most is that people just want to be able to look after their teeth well and not feel self conscious when they smile. To that end through some of the experiences that I've had, here are 7 keys to improving the look and feel of your teeth to help you smile more confidently.

1. Can good oral hygiene improve you smile and save you money?

Have you ever noticed that over time, your teeth start to look yellow and dull especially around the gums?

A year ago I saw a new patient who had thought she has chipped the inside of one of her lower front teeth. She also complained of mouth odour and that she didn't like how stained her teeth looked. When I looked at her teeth I could see that since it had been more



than a year since her last dental visit, she had started to build up calculus (commonly called tartar) on her teeth and chipped part of the calculus off.

Most people build up calculus over time regardless of how well they clean their teeth. You can check on your own teeth if you open wide and look along the gum on the inside of your lower teeth. The plaque is what gives your teeth that furry feel and makes the teeth look dull and lifeless. In most people calculus is yellow but left untreated it absorbs stain and looks black.

Her gums were very red and she said they bleed when she brushed her teeth. This bleeding is called periodontal (gum) disease. Even if you've never had a cavity, gum disease affects 80% of the general population. Bad breath, red, swollen gums and bleeding are signs of gum disease although it is usually painless. Left untreated the underlying bone is affected and shrinks away overtime. This leads to teeth becoming loose and eventually loss of teeth. The disease can still be treated, but the bone and gum doesn't grow back!

The good news is that for most people regular professional teeth cleaning and good dental hygiene at home will reduce eliminate the gum disease. For those with more severe problems a regular maintenance program will help reduce the problem dramatically.

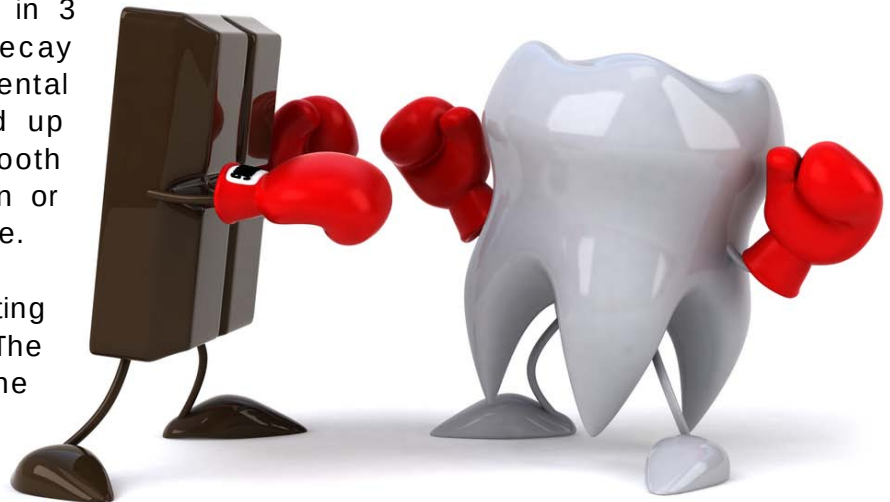
With continual diligent at home cleaning she can maintain her teeth looking healthy and shiny. Over time surface staining does form especially if you like tea, coffee and red wine or if you are a smoker. We can easily remove staining using a polishing paste when we see her 6 monthly for teeth cleaning which is very effective in removing stains.

2. Is sugar really bad for your teeth?

Having a natural confident smile is about having something to smile about. Imagine if you had dental decay in a front tooth and what that would look like. The surface would look chalky white, brown or even black and at later stages you'd feel a hole or cavity.

Statistics show around 1 in 3 people have active decay and without regular dental check ups you can end up with a large hole in your tooth before you feel any pain or even realised that it is there.

How can you avoid getting holes in your teeth? The easiest way is to reduce the amount of sugar in your diet. Sugar, especially in combination with acid such as in soft drink and fruit juice has a devastating effect on teeth. Even natural sugar will cause tooth decay. The more frequent your sugar intake the worse the effects on your teeth, so snacking on lollies and continual sipping of sugary drinks are the most problematic.



How can you reduce some of the effect? Try to limit the number of times a day you have sugary treats, confine sugary snacks and drinks to mealtimes and if you have to have a sweet drink, try sipping through a straw instead.

I had been seeing a teenage girl for a number of years and whenever I saw her, her teeth always looked great. After a very stressful period (the HSC) when we took x-rays of her teeth to my surprise even though she had no problems visible on the previous set of x-rays she now had areas of decay on 50% of her back teeth. Good cleaning alone isn't enough to keep you smiling; a diet low in sugar is just as important.

A man in his early 30s had come to see me as he had noticed brown areas developing between some of his front teeth, the decayed areas had become noticeable when he smiled and made him feel negatively about his whole mouth. With better cleaning and diet advice in combination with some natural looking tooth coloured fillings we fixed the look of his teeth and smile restoring his confidence.

3. Did you know that there is a solution to improve the look of all crooked and crowded teeth?

When you see someone with a beautiful confident smile what is the first thing you notice? Most people comment that straight well aligned teeth make-up a confident smile.



A long-term of mine had braces as a teenager but had not continued with her retention program so after a number of years, her front teeth started to become more crooked. She was now working and had started becoming more self-conscious about the look of her teeth. She wanted her teeth straightened but was reluctant to have braces again. After the invisible options to straighten her teeth were discussed she decided to have braces that stick to the inside of her teeth called Lingual braces. She got used to how this felt after a week and we finished her treatment in 4 months, she was very happy to have them off in time for her overseas holiday.

Do you remember how stressful it was when you were a teenager to fit in? Research into mental health of children shows how important image is to their self-esteem. I was surprised the impact teeth have until I treated a 16-year-old girl recently with braces. When I first met her she was very quiet and shy, she had quite a lot of crowding of her front teeth, one front tooth stuck out more than 45 degrees. I haven't completed her braces yet and although the changes to her teeth and face are amazing, it's the change in her body language that is rewarding. She is more talkative, she laughs and smiles more and her level of confidence is completely different.

What if you can't wait for straight teeth or don't want braces? You will be surprised how quickly and discreetly braces can be done. If this isn't for you there are a number of treatments that we can do to change the shape of your teeth to make them appear straighter.

One patient who was about to get married had gaps between her front teeth and some stuck out further than others. What she wants is that when her family sees her on her wedding day they are focused on how happy and radiant she is. She is conscious of how her teeth look and wants to look in the mirror on her wedding day and see the smile that reflects how happy she feels. With the limited time frame cosmetic bonding drastically improved the look of her teeth and she was very happy with the result.



4. You don't have to live with discoloured teeth and you could be just 60 minutes away from a brighter whiter smile



When you look at your teeth in the mirror what do you notice first? Most people especially as they get older notice their teeth becoming more yellow. This is a natural process that occurs because the inner layer (dentin) of the tooth, gets thicker and more yellow over time. The outer layer (enamel) gets thinner with age so the colour of dentine shows through more. That means that no matter what you do your teeth will become more yellow over time.

Do you prefer coffee or tea? Most adults prefer one or the other and drink on average 1-2 per day. Like smoking, coffee, tea, colas and red wine and stain your teeth brown.

If you have more abnormal staining for example dark brown and yellow patches, or grey bands on your teeth this can be due to antibiotics, other medications and severe fevers when your where a child and your teeth where still growing.



A lady who I know very well got married earlier this year. It was such an exciting time for her but she was concerned about the colour of her teeth. She wanted to know that in the hundreds of photographs that would be taken she would have a dazzling white smile. I polished off the superficial brown staining from tea and coffee drinking so the colour of her teeth improved straight away. For a sparkly white look we discussed her options for teeth whitening. The two main options are the in-chair one appointment whitening and the custom made take home kit. For convenience and time constraints she decided to have the in-chair treatment. She was over the moon with the results and on her wedding day she definitely had smile confidence.

Another lady wanted teeth whitening because as a child she was given Tetracycline antibiotics, this causes a deeper grey staining inside the teeth. This is quite difficult to treat but longer term whitening with custom trays did achieve good results.

If the colour of your teeth is making you self-conscious about your smile there are some good options to give you that dazzling smile that you will love.

5. Did you know that the most beautiful people in the world are also the most symmetrical?

If you look carefully at your own face, do you notice that your features such as your eyes and your nose are not perfectly symmetrical? If you took a photo of yourself cut in half and took the mirror image of one side it would not look the same as what you see in the mirror. Studies have shown that the more symmetrical your features, statistically more people would find your face attractive. This is also the same with your smile. The better your teeth fit the symmetry of your face the more balanced your face will look.



A good example of this is if you have seen Tom Cruise's smile change over time. In his early career his teeth were quite crowded and crooked. At some point he has had braces to straighten his teeth but because of his busy on screen schedule this was probably completed in a very short span of time and as a result if you look carefully you will see that the symmetry of his teeth do not line up with the middle of his face.

A patient I started with Invisalign treatment (clear removable braces) sought treatment because her teeth were crowded to one side and while she couldn't

tell me exactly what bothered her she knew it has something to do with her front two teeth which is where issues with symmetry are the most noticeable.

If you draw a line down the midline of your face and one between the middle of your two front teeth, the lines should match up. The further apart these lines are the less symmetrical.

Improving the smile symmetry is something we can incorporate into our treatment plan so with this patient's Invisalign, I will aim to straighten her teeth but also to straighten her smile and restore the facial balance.

6. How much of your teeth can you see when you smile? Do you know the proportions to a smile with the wow factor?



If you look at different peoples smiles you will start to see things that can throw off the balance of a smile. The height and width of your smile makes a difference.

Studies have surveyed general groups of the population and found that the ideal amount of tooth display is so when you smile you see all of your top teeth a small amount of the lower teeth, minimal gum above the teeth

and you can see between 8-10 of your teeth. This will give you the "Julia Roberts" smile with the extra wow factor. Smiles that show a lot of gum above the top teeth or smiles that don't show a lot of the top teeth can throw off the balance of your smile.

A patient of mine has such a narrow upper jaw that his back bottom teeth closed together on the outside of his top teeth. As a teenager he had the teeth either side of the top middle teeth taken out to relieve crowding and his eye teeth (canine teeth) moved across to fill the space. The shape of the eye teeth are pointy and triangular whereas the tooth that was in that position originally was flat and rectangular. This meant that when he smiled, the balance was off and his smile was quite narrow. To improve the look of his smile, we placed veneers (facings) on 8 of his front teeth and built them forward and outwards so that when he closed his teeth together the top teeth looked like they were biting



over the bottom teeth which is much closer to the ideal position. The difference that this made especially in photographs was amazing and he was very happy with the result.

7. A great natural smile happens from birth. Steps you can take from pregnancy to give your child the most opportunity to develop great teeth and a confident smile.

Even when a child is in the womb some of their adult teeth have already started to form and everything from pregnancy to birth and beyond can affect how their teeth develop.

Studies show that a large percentage of women don't think they can see a dentist when they are pregnant. In reality it is actually a good thing to see us during the second trimester. Once you are past the first trimester it is relatively safe to see the dentist and we take every precaution. If you have cavities in your teeth when your baby is born the bacteria that causes decay can latch into their mouth from birth meaning that they will be more susceptible to decay as their teeth form. This can lead to problems in their adult teeth.



Good preventative and maintenance dental care of children's teeth can lead to improved facial development, straighter teeth, brighter and disease free smiles.

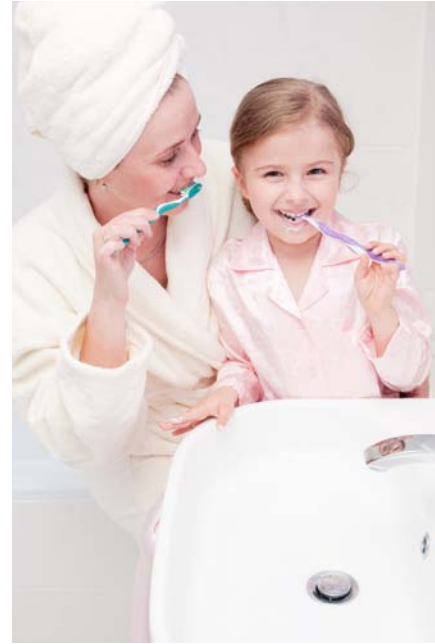


I treated a young child who when we first saw her had multiple cavities in her baby teeth. Unfortunately some we could not save which had to be removed but what we could do was place a small dental device to hold the space where the baby teeth were now missing open so that the teeth on either side did not drift into the space. If we had done nothing, without the baby teeth in the correct positions the adult teeth also

tend not to develop into the right location and this is what can lead to crowding and orthodontic problems later in life. By maintaining the appropriate space between the baby teeth, it helps the adult teeth grow into the right positions.

Habits such as thumb and dummy sucking should be phased out as soon as practical with young children as long term use will distort how the teeth and jaws align and this effect can transfer through to their adult teeth and jaws.

Lastly starting good dental habits, teeth cleaning and diet low in sugar early in life in combination with a positive attitude is the best start you can have to having a natural confident smile for life.



Where to from here?

With today's technology and our expertise, we guarantee everybody can have a more natural confident smile. If you are ready to take the next step right now or even if you just want some advice on making your teeth as healthy as they can be, ring us today at Vivid Dental.

