

Those in the public eye have long recognised the importance of a winning smile. Check out the television presenters, not to mention our politicians. Of course, it's a bonus in business too.

If you're not one of the few blessed with beautiful teeth, the ravages of time can render a smile less than captivating.

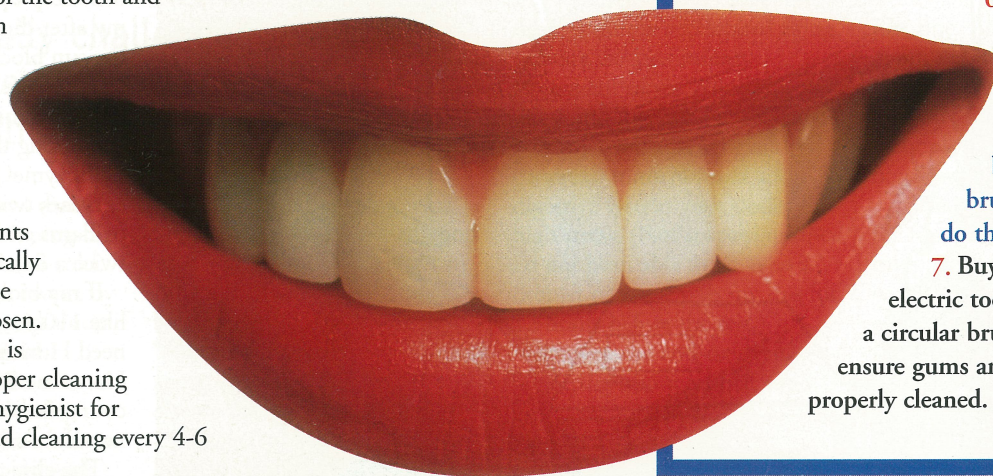
First consider the unseen blooper - odorous breath. Lunch laced with garlic, curry or cheese plus extras such as coffee and wine is the recipe for ripe breath.

Among other common problems are receding gums - hence the term 'long in the tooth' - associated with aging or poorly cared for younger teeth.

Periodontal disease attacks the tiny ligaments that surround tooth roots and secure the teeth to the jaw bone. Plaque bacterium gathers at the base of the tooth and causes inflammation and bleeding.

Eventually shallow pockets may form between the gum and tooth, and, if this problem is not stopped, the ligaments will become chronically inflamed causing the affected teeth to loosen.

The best solution is prevention with proper cleaning and a visit to your hygienist for thorough scaling and cleaning every 4-6 months.



## DENTAL SENSE

1. Don't wait for your tooth brush to look like a shaggy-dog. Change it monthly.
2. A soft tooth brush is preferable. The harder variety can wear away gums.
3. Brush at least three times a day. If you can't brush immediately after a meal, rinse your mouth with water to remove food particles and help neutralise food acids.
4. Avoid abrasive toothpastes. Choose a smooth creamy fluoride one.
5. Not only do infected gums and stomach acids cause bad breath (halitosis), so does a furry tongue. Try gently brushing your tongue to remove the grunge.
6. Use floss or tape at least once daily, preferably at night, because brushing doesn't do the whole job.
7. Buy yourself an electric toothbrush with a circular brush motion to ensure gums and teeth are properly cleaned.

# BITING MATTERS

by Evelyn Lundström

## COSMETICALLY CORRECT

If your teeth look like yellowing tomb-stones, don't despair! There is an amazing array of treatments available from fake 'gum guards' worn over the teeth if you are really looking long in the tooth to veneers which fill gaps and cover cracks.

**BLEACHING** Home bleaching kits are now common place. You can be fitted with a bleaching mould with a small amount of tooth whitening gel inside. Worn for an hour a day for several weeks, or 10-14 nights while you sleep, the results are dramatic. Thereafter, just wear the tray for one or two nights every six or nine months to preserve your whiter smile. Cost: \$350-\$450.

**PORCELAIN VENEERS** Not only used to reshape crooked teeth, other

benefits can include adding porcelain to the outer surfaces of the side teeth giving cheek support. Re-building worn down front teeth has a further benefit - by providing improved lip support. This can eliminate small lines around the mouth. Cost: \$450 - \$600 each.

**CROWNS** Used to strengthen heavily filled, darkened and/or weakened teeth, porcelain crowns are now so natural looking they could be mistaken for your real teeth. Cost: Begin at \$900 for one tooth.

**GUM LIFTS** This procedure is perfect for those whose teeth appear tiny due to a low gum-line. A laser is used to trim away excess gum. It's a simple procedure done in the dentist's chair. The result is sensational, showing more teeth for a fuller smile. Cost: \$230 - \$250 per tooth.

WITH THE FOCUS ON HEALTHY TEETH AND GUMS AND DENTAL HEALTH WEEK APPROACHING (AUGUST 2 - 6), YOU CAN HAVE ALL YOUR DENTAL QUESTIONS ADDRESSED ON A NATIONAL FREECALL HOTLINE. PHONE 1800 678383.

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