

The Confident Smile

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By Sonia Kruger

Most women like to look a little younger than their actual age and we're all fascinated with any new products or procedures that promise the fountain of youth. But what really works?

In 2008, I hosted a show called *10 Years Younger in 10 Days*. You might recall at the start of the program the person's age was 'guesstimated' by people on the street and we then took an average as our starting point. After our 10-day makeover, we took the street poll again to check on the progress made.

Through taking this journey with many people on the show, I found the single thing that made the biggest difference was how good their smile looked. When someone's teeth and smile were improved, their appearance lifted and it took years off their face.

For many people, a trip to the dentist is an unpleasant thought. However, much has changed, so much so that visiting my dentist is more akin to visiting a spa these days. There are also now so many more options to improve your smile. So if you're not completely confident smiling, maybe it's time to check out what's now available.

Pitt Street Dental Centre in Sydney is a leader in cosmetic dentistry and its owner, Valerie De Marco, says there are now many options for creating a beautiful, confident smile.

"A beautiful, dramatically white smile radiates good health, youth and vitality," Valerie says. "Some patients are looking for subtle change, others are looking for an 'OMG, wow!' reaction when they walk out the door. We can do both and everything in between with an overriding aim of making sure we meet the expectations of our patients."

Here are five of the major treatments offered by most cosmetic dentists.

1. Teeth Whitening

Whitening is the fastest and most cost-effective way to lift your smile. In around an hour, a single treatment with the latest whitening lamp in combination with a specially formulated gel applied to your teeth will instantly give you an 8-14 shade improvement. This really is the 'Wow!' factor. If you have straight, natural teeth that are simply discoloured or stained with no visible fillings (or crowns, veneers, etc), then you can literally walk in and walk out an hour later with a fresh, bright, white smile. There are lots of DIY products on the market, but if you want whitening done safely and correctly, see your dentist.

2. Invisalign

Invisalign is a clever system to move and straighten crooked teeth using practically invisible removable aligners that fit over your teeth. The aligners are worn around the clock and are changed every two weeks, with each new set moving your teeth slightly more until they are straight. Invisalign takes several months to do its job, however unlike metal braces, most people will never notice your invisible aligners are in place.

3. Porcelain Veneers

A porcelain veneer is a very thin covering glued to the face of your tooth that can change its colour and shape. A single porcelain veneer can disguise a minor defect in your smile, or several veneers placed over all the teeth in your smile zone can give you a completely new look. Porcelain veneers are strong and durable and a very popular option in cosmetic dentistry today.

4. Crowns

If one or more of your teeth has a major chip, fracture, bad decay or is missing entirely, a crown is often used to replace it. A crown is a replacement tooth typically made from porcelain, that blends in perfectly with the other teeth in your mouth. If it is in good condition, the root of the tooth that the crown is replacing can be used to anchor it in place.

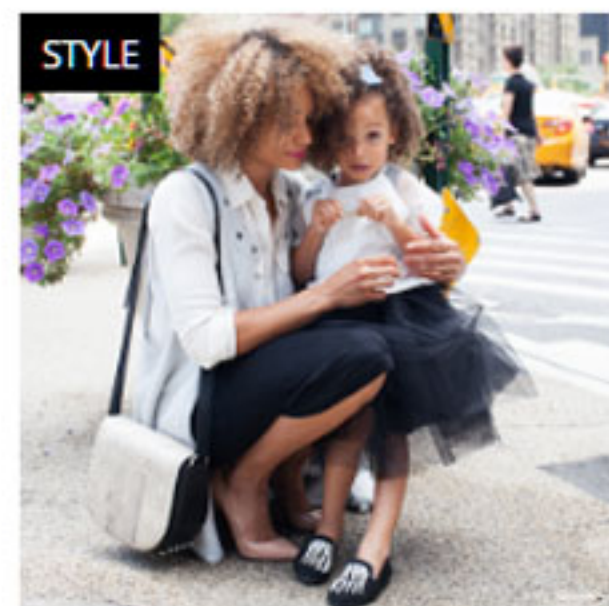
5. Dental Implants

If you have a missing tooth or a badly decayed tooth that needs to be removed, a dental implant will often be recommended as a replacement. A dental implant is made of titanium and replaces the root of the missing tooth. Placing an implant into your jaw is a surgical procedure and once it is in place, a crown can then be attached to the implant to replace the missing tooth.

"We often use a system of Progressive Smile Design at Pitt Street Dental which allows our patients the chance to change their smile in stages," says Dr Michael Cai, Pitt Street Dental's principal. "We start with whitening and sometimes patients are so satisfied with the result there is no need for more expensive or invasive treatments. Under the right circumstances, whitening will give you a phenomenal result for less than a thousand dollars and in just over an hour" says Dr Cai.

Pitt Street Dental Centre is offering all readers who call and mention this article a complimentary examination including x-rays if required. Visit their website here:
<http://www.pittstdentalcentre.com.au/>

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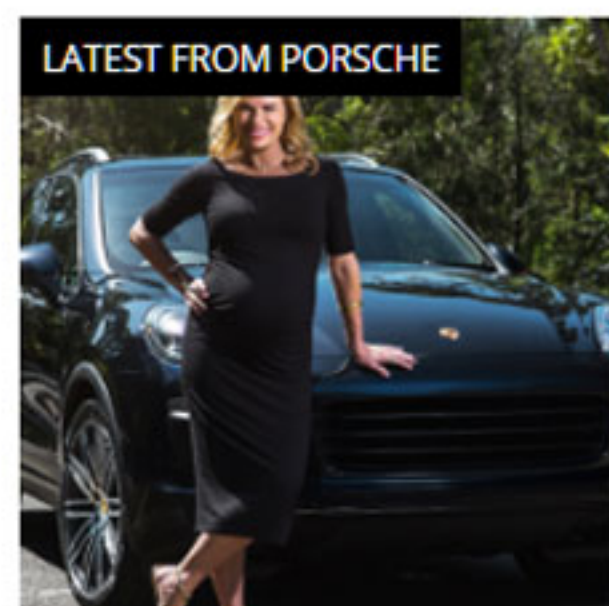
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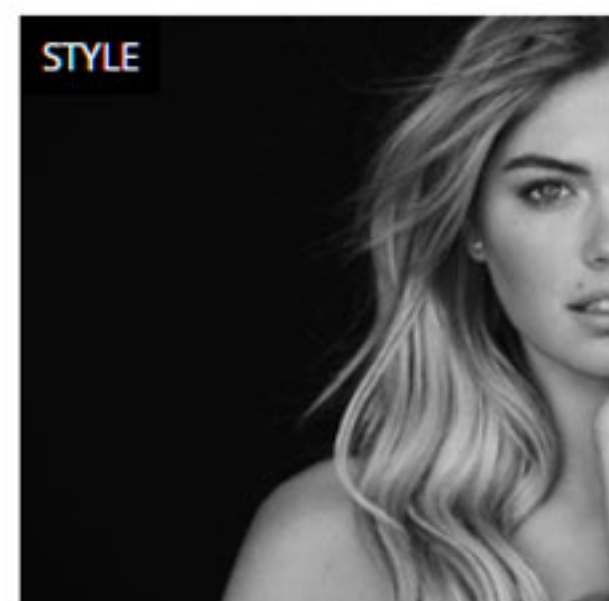
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