

Smile Nice: Luke Elijah's virgin experience with aesthetic dentistry

Smile and the world smiles back at you. A warm and friendly smile is highly prized as it has the potential to enhance the quality of our careers and social lives. As such, we all wish that we owned a set of Hollywood pearly whites like those of Donny and Marie Osmond. But what if you are not genetically blessed in the oral department? Fret not, most people are not lucky enough to be born with a flawless set of teeth, and help is readily available with modern cosmetic dentistry. You no longer have to face others with missing, discoloured or chipped teeth.

I paid a visit to top cosmetic dentist, [Dr William Chong](#) who is also the CEO of Pacific Healthcare Holdings. My consultation with the award-winning doctor begun with an X-ray, followed by an examination of my teeth. The eloquent doctor deduced that my teeth were too large and jagged. He proceeded to shave and file my teeth using a technique called "dental re-contouring". After what seemed like only a short five minutes, the doctor handed me a mirror. I gasped! My teeth were now all even, and smoothed out. [Dr Chong](#) beamed at me and replied, "I do this free of charge for all my patients. It just takes a short time and makes them very happy. If I can make your teeth look this much better only after a mere five minutes, imagine what I can do given more time." I was definitely convinced!

Laser teeth whitening or "bleaching" is the safe and effective method to instantly lighten stained teeth. I never had this procedure done before, but I heard that it hurts from friends who have tried it, and thus was a tad apprehensive. Plastic retractors were used to force my mouth wide open. They were a little uncomfortable at first but I slowly got accustomed to them. The doctor gently applied a layer of thick blue paste over my exposed teeth.

A beam of laser that emanated heat was then placed directly over my teeth. Half an hour later, the whole process was repeated for a second time. My teeth were noticeably more radiant after the bleaching session. They looked a few shades lighter and whiter than before. The downside to this fast treatment was that I had to endure sharp sensitivity and excruciating pain for nearly an entire day following the session. Was it all worth it in the end? You bet!

No dazzling smile would ever be complete without a full set of clean healthy teeth to compliment it. There are a variety of cosmetic dental procedures available to enhance the physical appearance of our teeth. They include: teeth whitening, dental bonding, porcelain veneers, crowns, bridges, dental implants and gum regeneration.



Laser teeth whitening is arguably the fastest and most effective method of teeth whitening. It restores your teeth to their natural colour, or even lighter if you so desire. This quick and easy procedure effectively and safely revitalizes the colour of your teeth that was stained due to age, tea and coffee, or use of medication. The average cost is \$900 per session (45mins – 1 hour). Patients who have severely stained teeth may require 2 -3 sessions to be able to see good results.

Dental bonding is a process in which a natural looking resin material is bonded to your tooth to reshape or restore it to its original form. The price is \$150 - \$200 per tooth.



Porcelain veneers and crowns are used on teeth that are severely discoloured or worn down. Veneers are thin layers of porcelain that can be fixed onto an existing tooth in order to restore the appearance. The tooth surface is trimmed and a bonding technique is applied to attach a thin sheet of porcelain to the tooth in order to create a natural look. CEREC Porcelain Veneers or crowns costs between \$1000 - \$1500 per tooth.



Dental bridges are a special kind of dentures used to replace missing teeth by utilizing the support from the neighboring teeth on both sides of the gap. Missing teeth affect speech, chewing as well as appearance, and can also cause the remaining teeth to shift. Cost of dental bridges are approximately \$800 – \$1000 (3-unit Bridge), or \$1200 - \$1500 per unit for porcelain dental bridges.



Dental implants are artificial roots made from titanium which are used to support porcelain crowns and/ or bridges in replacing missing teeth. They involve the insertion of titanium pegs into the jawbone through a minor surgical procedure. Compared to dentures, dental implants are stronger, more comfortable and they last longer. In addition, there is no need to trim adjacent teeth for support. Dental Implant will set you back by between \$5000 - \$7000 per tooth (including titanium implant prosthetics). They are the specialty of [Dr Chong](#).



Gum regeneration is a surgical procedure that restores the gum tissues that have receded by means of transferring it from somewhere else in the mouth, or by creating a space for the body to regenerate its own gum naturally. Recession of the gums, which is known as "gingival" can be caused by many factors including clenching or excessive grinding of teeth. General gum surgery costs between \$1000 – \$1500. Cosmetic gum surgery costs between \$1500 - \$2000. Gum grafting cost between \$1500 - \$2000.

Source: THINK MAGAZINE, Issue 19