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Mind the gaps

onesie brand
OnePiece uses imperfectly
perfect models



JASMINE GARDNER



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Published: 08 February 2012

It was once the first cosmetic procedure on the list for all with new-found fame. Hot foot to the dentist, get all your teeth filed down to stumps, and have some pearly white perfect veneers clamped over the top.

But thanks to the imperfect smiles of stars such as True Blood's Anna Paquin and models Georgia May Jagger and Lara Stone, the "Hollywood" smile is no longer desirable and British teeth are back.

"The fad for filing teeth down for full veneers has gone," says Dr Simon Darfoor, who runs a Harley Street dental practice. "People are looking for a halfway point. They want a more attractive smile but with a less destructive procedure."

Dr Tim Bradstock-Smith of The London Smile Clinic agrees. "Gone are the days when patients ask me for a Hollywood Smile. The number one thing I get asked for is a natural-looking smile," he says.

"Natural teeth have highly complex surface anatomy, texture, colour variation, translucency and all sorts of imperfections. We won't mimic the unsightly flaws but we like to keep some 'perfect imperfections' in there."

When Lady Gaga wore a set of diamond gap teeth in a video for Mugler's spring/summer 2012 catwalk show, it confirmed that for this season British teeth - gaps and all - are back. Cheryl Cole must be kicking herself.

"Many patients with gaps have left them, or if they have a very large gap they are happy for us to close it only halfway," says Dr Mervyn Druian of The London Centre for Cosmetic Dentistry.

"There are still people like members of the cast of The Only Way Is Essex who come to me wanting to get those over-the-top white veneers," says Dr Druian. "But most people don't want that at all.

The penny is dropping. People realise that if they have all this dentistry early on, it's not going to last. Today there are more subtle ways to improve your smile, and if you want to change it later, all your teeth will still be there."

Here are some of the latest dental treatments to give you perfect British teeth.

Off-white whitening

"The problem with whitening is that it's addictive, because you don't want your teeth to return to a yellower shade," says Dr Darfoor. "But you can't do it again and again, because repeated treatments can cause hypersensitivity, or, in the worst case, you might need a root canal."

Darfoor's Airflow Jet Wash is a 10-minute treatment using sodium bicarbonate, which blasts away stains and plaque. "It will get your teeth as naturally white as they will go," he says.

£85, Darfoor Dental Practice, 1 Harley Street, W1 (020 7580 2294, drsimondarfoor.com)

Subtle straightening

Nobody wants to go back to the years of train-track teeth and the latest alternative at The London Smile Clinic is the Inman Aligner. The removable brace sorts out uneven front teeth in eight weeks.

"It doesn't do everything but for crowded or protruding front teeth it works like a dream and is ridiculously fast," says Dr Bradstock-Smith.

From £1,850, The London Smile Clinic, 40-44 Clipstone Street, W1 (020 7255 2559, londonssmile.co.uk)

No-filling veneers

Composite veneers, made from the material used in white fillings, are applied as a fine layer on the front of the original tooth. They reshape and hide the blemishes on teeth but they can also be removed and the teeth below remain intact.

"Because you don't file down any of the tooth your teeth will initially feel bigger until you get used to it," says Dr Darfoor.

From £650 per tooth. Darfoor Dental Practice, as before

Surface clean-up

For those who need a bit of work and whitening but don't want anything too drastic, the Tooth Lip-O package starts with a hygiene appointment and is followed up with an ultra-sensitive whitening treatment called Thermal Diffuser and some minor gum and tooth contouring to even your smile without veneers.

From £600, London Centre for Cosmetic Dentistry, 93 Haverstock Hill, NW3 (020 7722 1235, londoncosmeticdentistry.co.uk)