



the right bite

when providing you with your dream smile? For many people, receiving a beautiful new smile is a huge commitment both emotionally and financially, so you'll want to be sure that the treatment provided, whether it be composite bonding or porcelain veneers or crowns, is going to last. Having a good bite is one of the most important determinants of long-lasting teeth and restorations.

It is no surprise that porcelain veneers have become the number one choice of restoration when it comes to smile makeovers. Without doubt their popularity

☞ Sometimes the teeth may need to be reshaped so the bite is more balanced ☞

has increased as a result of their use in reality makeover television shows. Dr Yung says this highlights one of the biggest misconceptions in dentistry; that stronger materials will last longer. While porcelain restorations are extremely strong and very durable, they will not withstand the damaging effects of a bad bite.

So while it is important to find a cosmetic dentist who is able to provide an array of treatment options for performing a smile makeover, it is even more important to find one who understands and is capable of fixing a bad bite, otherwise you could find yourself replacing expensive restorations.

The flip-side here, of course, is that if you have a good bite it is quite possible that a stunning smile makeover can be performed using less expensive and less sophisticated material.

Dr Yung offers free initial no-obligation consultations valued at \$90 to discuss your smile.

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Occlusal disease is a term very few people have heard of, which is surprising since the vast majority of people have it at least to some degree. In simple terms, occlusal disease relates to a bad bite.

Characteristics of occlusal disease are jaw pain, clicking and locking; muscle-tension headaches or neck pain; severe wear, chipping or cracking of your natural teeth; sensitivity; loose, shifting or broken teeth and fillings; gum recession and grooves on exposed root surfaces.

Before embarking on any comprehensive dental treatment your dentist should evaluate your 'bite'. Dr Dylan Yung, a leading cosmetic dentist and co-founder of the New Zealand Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry, says that while he routinely checks for tooth decay, gum disease, oral cancer and muscle function, occlusal disease is of paramount concern.

"We underestimate the damaging effects

of a bad bite," he says. "Abnormal biting forces that are created by a bad bite can split or crack seemingly healthy teeth and even the strongest fillings. Sometimes the damage is catastrophic and necessitates tooth removal."

Occlusal disease occurs when the biting surfaces of teeth change contour, shape (typically through accidents and having fillings placed) and position (typically following orthodontic tooth movement and misalignment of teeth during their development). Just in case you didn't catch on the first time, occlusal disease can be caused by some dental treatment!

Treatment for occlusal disease ranges from minor (painless, injection-free) recontouring of tooth shape (called equilibration) to more extensive reconstruction of severely damaged teeth. Simply patching a worn tooth or just fixing the teeth that show are recipes for failure.

Why is diagnosing a bad bite important