

AESTHETIC GUM SURGERY

Notes for guidance

When you look in the mirror and smile, are you happy with the results? Many people are not. In some cases, too much of their gums is visible around their teeth which creates a “gummy” look. Others may dislike their smile because their gums have receded so much that their teeth look much longer than normal. Regardless of whether you’re showing too much gum or not enough, aesthetic gum surgery may be able to help you solve the problem and feel better about yourself and your smile.

Is aesthetic gum surgery right for you?

Aesthetic gum surgery may be a good choice for you, especially if your unhappiness with your smile is interfering with your self-confidence and your personal and professional relationships. You can arrange for an individual consultation with a professional who is skilled in cosmetic dentistry so that he or she can evaluate your teeth and gums to determine whether your problem warrants this type of surgery. Keep in mind that some dental insurance plans will not cover aesthetic gum surgery and that additional procedures, such as adding veneers, may be needed to complete the desired look that you want.

What is aesthetic gum surgery?

Aesthetic gum surgery actually includes more than one type of procedure, depending on your particular problem. If you have too much of your gum line showing when you smile, the surgery will involve removing some of the extra bone and gum in the area. If you don’t have enough gum showing, then your dentist may take tissue from elsewhere in your mouth and use it to improve the appearance of another specific area.

Regardless of which procedure you are having done, the entire process will most likely take place in your cosmetic dentist’s office. Your dentist will probably use a local anesthetic to numb the area so you won’t feel any pain. If the procedure is being done to your entire mouth, however, your dentist may recommend using a general anesthetic so you’ll be asleep through the whole procedure, which will help with any feelings of anxiety that you may have.

Are you a good candidate?

Only your cosmetic dentist can tell you for sure whether you should have aesthetic gum surgery on your mouth to improve your smile. However, there are a few things he or she will be looking for. For starters, he or she wants to make sure you are relatively healthy. If you don’t have any health conditions which might interfere with your ability to heal properly or which might predispose you to developing an infection after the surgery, you may be a good candidate.

Dentists prefer not to perform gum surgery on smokers and on people who use chewing tobacco. The chemicals in the tobacco can actually interfere with your ability to heal properly. In addition, both of these behaviors can damage the appearance of your teeth in other ways. If you are serious about having aesthetic gum surgery performed, then consider quitting smoking at least a few weeks before and after the surgery.

How is the procedure performed?

Aesthetic gum surgery procedures do vary, depending on the problem being corrected. If you have a “gummy smile,” then your dentist will first administer the anesthetic and make sure that you are comfortable and relaxed. Next, he or she will use special instruments to remove small parts of the gum tissue so that not as much will be visible. In some cases, the dentist may also need to cut through the gum to reach the underlying bone. He or she will then remove a portion of the bone and a portion of the tissue before sewing the gum up. This procedure is known as a Gingivectomy.

If your gums have receded so too much of your teeth are showing, then your dentist will probably perform a gum graft. Before your procedure, your dentist will carefully examine your mouth to find areas of healthy gum tissue. The dentist will remove the healthy gum tissue and will attach it to your existing gum line. If you do not have enough healthy gum tissue available, your dentist may recommend using a specially designed artificial membrane instead. The membrane won't look any different than your normal gums, and it serves the same purpose.

Depending on the amount of work required, both procedures usually take between 30 to 60 minutes to complete.

How long will it take before I feel normal again?

Both of these procedures require very little post-operative care. After a Gingivectomy, you'll be able to get back to work and your normal activities that same day or the next. You may have some mild discomfort for about a week while the healing process continues.

With a gum graft, the amount of recovery time varies depending on the extent of the procedure. For a basic graft, you probably won't feel much discomfort and take simply take an over-the-counter pain reliever to help you through the short week or so of healing. If more extensive grafting was necessary, your healing time may take a little longer and may involve slightly more discomfort.

For both surgeries, you will probably be told to take antibiotics or to rinse your mouth with an anti-bacterial mouthwash for about a week or two after the procedure. Still, you should be feeling normal after the first seven days or less.

Are there any risks?

Both types of aesthetic gum surgery are generally safe. However, all surgeries do involve a small amount of risk from the anesthetic and from infections. You can reduce these risks by following your dentist's orders carefully and by being honest about any health problems you may have which could interfere with your healing or which may cause problems with the anesthetic.

Will I be happy with my results?

The answer is a resounding yes! Most people who have aesthetic gum surgery performed are thrilled with the results. After just a week of healing and of minor discomfort, you will have an improved smile and improved self-confidence. The results are usually well worth the effort.

Further Information

This brochure has been prepared to give a basic understanding of the procedure before a consultation takes place, and to cover many of the questions frequently asked about this type of cosmetic surgery. Final decisions should not be made until an individual assessment has taken place with the surgeon.

There is no obligation on the part of the patient to undergo surgery by attending for consultation.

If you have any further questions or would like to arrange a consultation please fill in the online form on our website at www.surgeryone.co.uk. All enquiries are always treated confidentially.