

# Not All Cosmetic Dentistry Is Created Equal

Prominent Atlanta Cosmetic Dentist  
Dr. Debra Gray King Shows How to Get  
A New Smile That Won't Make You Frown

**W**ho doesn't love marveling at the miraculous transformations of makeovers?

Or, better yet, dreaming about their own?

These days, million dollar smiles, among other beauty-enhancing procedures, aren't just for celebrities. Take a look at the portfolio of prominent Atlanta cosmetic dentist Dr. Debra Gray King. The before-and-after photos are amazing.

Her patient Frank Guess, of Athens, is all too happy to flash his pearly whites, which looked yellow and antique before Dr. King worked her wonders.

The teeth of another patient, Jackie Warner, were crooked and had dark staining. Since having her front teeth covered with porcelain veneers –



porcelain shells bonded to the front side of the teeth, she is proud of her picture-perfect smile.

Thanks to technical advances and television exposure, cosmetic dentistry has become a possibility for people from all walks of life, says Dr. King, who was selected to showcase her work on ABC's *Extreme Makeover*.

What used to be a long and complicated procedure that required hours of prep work and several long visits can be a remarkably easy and comfortable procedure today under the care of an experienced and properly trained cosmetic dentist. "Today, in about the same time it takes for dinner and a movie, you could have a beautiful new smile," says Dr. King. "Because of this, we see people from all over the country visit us to get the smile of their dreams."



## THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY

Unfortunately though, many people are discovering that smile makeovers can be costly in more ways than one. Finding unattractive or unnatural dental work is easy to do. Even if cosmetic dentistry appears satisfactory initially, patients sometimes experience years later the heartbreak of discoloration and leakage around margins. Before dental patients give their consent to extensive treatment, they should do their homework.

### KEY LESSON

A veneer is not a veneer. Although near-perfect smiles are what many people have come to expect from veneers – that’s not always the result.

Problems can arise when people go to inexperienced or poorly skilled dentists. “There are many days where we get patients in, having had work done elsewhere, who have spent thousands of dollars and are unhappy with the results,” says Dr. King. Some of the more challenging cases can be redoing prior dental work. Unfortunately, dentists who do not have the skill level to deliver moderate to advanced veneer cases can consequently end up with less than beautiful results.

Some veneers are so square, bulky, or so white-out white that they don’t look real. “The look you want from veneers is not opaque white, but translucent, a surface that reflects light like a real tooth,” explains Dr. Richard Creasman, an instructor of cosmetic dentistry and a partner of the Atlanta Center for Cosmetic Dentistry. Depending on your skin tone, he said, overly white veneers can “really pop out at you.” One benchmark is that the color of veneers should be as white as the whites of your eyes.

Some veneers are too long, impairing speech. “The tongue gets locked behind the upper teeth,” Dr. Creasman said, “and that makes it hard to say ‘m’, ‘s’ or ‘th.’ ” “It’s very important to ask dentists for photos of veneer work they have performed,” says Dr. Creasman. Some dentists buy generic before-and-after photos from dental supply companies to show patients. But the customer has to do their due diligence by simply asking, “Did you do these veneers?”



A BEAUTIFUL SMILE CAN MAKE YOU LOOK YEARS YOUNGER.



Dr. King says veneers require artistry on the part of the laboratory as well, which mixes the porcelain to make sure they come out the right color and shape. Porcelain veneers do not need to nor should they feel thick if made properly. If this happens, one possibility is that either the dentist did not reduce the tooth enough to allow room for porcelain or the dental lab made them too thick. Usually it is because there was poor planning and the tooth was not reduced enough. Working with an experienced master ceramist and doing a diagnostic wax-up of the proposed veneers will help to achieve a more ideal outcome.

Smile designs usually take at least two visits to a cosmetic dentist. In the first visit, the cosmetic dentist contours and designs the patient’s teeth. Temporary veneers (made of resin) are then placed for the patient to wear for the next few weeks in order to evaluate the size

and shape before the real porcelains are made. During the second visit, the patient gets to see their custom-made porcelain veneers.

In closing, porcelain veneers can be an amazing life-changing experience. You just want to make sure, as with any procedure, to research the cosmetic dentist. It is an art and the cosmetic dentist must have an artistic talent in order to achieve the best results: a beautiful, healthy and natural looking smile. ■

DR. DEBRA GRAY KING • DR. RICHARD CREASMAN  
ATLANTA CENTER FOR COSMETIC DENTISTRY.COM  
5014 ROSWELL ROAD • ATLANTA, GEORGIA  
404/847-9711