

One are the days when a visit to the dentist meant a quick poke around with a sharp stick and a flea in your ear for not flossing. Dentists are now cottoning on to the fact that people are no longer prepared to put up with imperfect teeth, and as a result of this they're offering smile transforming cosmetic dentistry.

What's more, with so many clients keen to complement their new smiles with an overall more youthful look, dentists are increasingly offering non-invasive cosmetic treatments too.

FACE FACTS

The popularity of television makeover shows, such as Channel 4's 10 Years Younger - in which women who've effectively given up on themselves are totally transformed - is reflective of a growing trend for cosmetic enhancement.

And non-surgical cosmetic treatments, in particular, are becoming increasingly sought after.

These treatments are quick - they usually take less than an hour - relatively painless, require little or no recovery time and are also inexpensive, compared with major cosmetic surgery operations that can run into thousands.

IN GOOD HANDS

Being offered these treatments at your dentist makes good sense - dentists have to undergo years of medical-based training and are experienced at administering drugs and injecting patients.

What's more, dentists' surgeries are hygienic and are fully equipped with all the health and safety equipment required too. And it's likely that you already have a relationship with your dentist and his team that will make you feel more confident about having this type of treatment at his surgery.

Plus, many practices have specialist practitioners to administer non-invasive cosmetic treatments. The Brunswick Square Dental Practice in Hove, East Sussex, for example, has an aesthetic nurse who is able to administer Botox, Restylane and dermal fillers to frame your smile and give you a more youthful look.

WHAT'S ON OFFER?

If you are having your teeth fixed, then why not try sorting out those stubborn lines and wrinkles too? Here are some treatments that your local dentist may be able to offer...

BOTOX

The full name for Botox is botulinum toxin and it is used to reduce the appearance of crow's feet, forehead creases and for tweaking the eyebrow up.

What's involved: Botulinum toxin is a purified protein that blocks the nerve signals from the brain which cause your muscles to move. This means that when you laugh or frown, your muscles don't receive the signal to move. As a result, the overlying skin then becomes smoother and unwrinkled, while the untreated facial muscles work normally.

Before the procedure, your skin will be cleaned and then small amounts of

botulinum toxin will be injected into the area you wish to be treated.

The results: The treated area should appear smoother and have noticeably less wrinkles. Changes are usually visible after about eight days, but it may take up to two or three weeks for the full effects of Botox to be seen. Results, in most circumstances, should last for about three to four months. But they are temporary and regular treatments are necessary to maintain the smooth and wrinkle-free appearance.

Aftercare: You will be advised by your practitioner not to massage or rub the treated area and to treat it gently for around 24 hours afterwards.

The risks: It's hard to predict how the injections will affect your muscles. Very occasionally, the treatment results in drooping eyelids or eyebrows. But this is temporary and will sort itself out when the effects of the injection wear off.

Cost: From £150 to £950.

DERMAL FILLERS

These are most commonly used to fill out and smooth away nose to mouth grooves, forehead lines, frown furrows, lipstick lines, acne pits and crow's feet. And it can also be used to plump up lips, which tend to get thinner with age.

What's involved: Dermal fillers are made from a range of materials. Some fillers are made from collagen, a natural protein, while others, such as Restylane, are derived from a synthetic form of hyaluronic acid. Collagen fillers require a skin test before treatment, but hyaluronic-acid fillers do not.

Before treatment, a mild anaesthetic may be applied. The filler is then injected into the skin below the wrinkle. Treatment takes between 30 minutes and an hour.

The results: Lines and wrinkles are softened, and thinning lips are plumped up and given more definition. Both collagen and hyaluronic acid fillers are temporary, and the effects usually last for around three to nine months.

Aftercare: You may be a little swollen and tender for about 24 hours afterwards, during which time you should avoid caffeine, alcohol, hot drinks and the sun. But make-up can be applied on the treated area immediately afterwards.

The risks: There's a small risk of allergic reaction to the filler and slight bruising of the treated area may occur.

Cost: Collagen injections from £300 to £550; Restylane from £200; lip enhancement costs around £350. ■



JUST GIVE IT A GO

Are you bothered about wrinkles or loss of facial volume? Is your complexion lifeless and blotchy? Do you want to restore your youthful appearance?

The team at Aura provides non-surgical cosmetic facial treatments which can help slow down the ageing process and make the most of what you have, to recreate your youthful natural appearance. The range of treatments on offer can help give you back your confidence and energy - these include:

- Wrinkle reduction
- Dermal fillers
- Skin peels

For free advice contact Aura, Kingstons House, 15 Coombe Road, Kingston-upon-Thames, Surrey KT2 7AB, call 020 8549 5710 or visit www.auradental.co.uk