

# STAR SMILES

Celebrity dentists tell you how to get movie-worthy teeth By **Rachel Rabkin**

If there is one thing celebrities specialize in, it's flashing their bright, picture-perfect smiles. But for many of them, those mega-watt teeth did not come as easily as you might imagine. Dentists have a few tricks up their sleeves to get stars' teeth looking as good as they do. Here are some insider tips from celebrity dentists on how you can get your smile looking youthful, fresh and fabulous.

## DAILY DENTAL CARE

First and foremost, take care of your pearly whites on a daily basis. This will keep your teeth and gums looking and feeling healthy. "Floss each day, and brush at least twice a day," says Dr. Susanne Cohen, a dentist in St. Louis, Mo. "And use a soft-bristled brush, which is much kinder on the gums than a medium-bristled brush and won't wear away tooth enamel." Wondering when to toss your tooth-brush? "Replace your toothbrush about every three months; that's when the bristles usually start to flare or flatten." If bad breath is a problem, gargle with a mouthwash like SmartMouth, which can give you fresh breath around the clock. Studies show that mouthwashes not only improve breath, they can also help fight gum disease.



## STAIN-FREE

When drinking coffee or wine, after every few sips, take a swig of water and swish it around in your mouth. This will help keep staining pigments from lingering, says Dr. Jonathan B. Levine.

## veneers

"The number-one way to get teeth straight and white is veneers," says celebrity dentist Dr. Lana Rozenberg of The Rozenberg Dental Day Spa in Manhattan. Adds Dr. Michael Apa, a dentist whose clients include Chloe Sevigny and Natasha Richardson, "Veneers are the standard for celebrities." With veneers, dentists shave a very thin layer off the front of each tooth, and in its place they bond a thin, white, straight porcelain layer. "It's like a press-on nail for the tooth," says Dr. Rozenberg. The result is an even, bright smile. "We take into account any asymmetry in a person's face and create veneers that make over their smile and impact the appearance of their entire face," says Dr. Apa. But keep in mind that if your teeth are extremely crooked, you'll first probably need to use some type of straightening device, like Invisalign clear braces, to fix your teeth's structure before going for the veneers. Also note that veneers are a permanent investment. They last for 15 to 25 years and then must be replaced. And they will cost you. "They can range from \$1,000 to \$2,500 per tooth, depending on where you get them done," says Dr. Rozenberg.



## LUMINEERS

The concept of Lumineers is similar to that of veneers except that Lumineers don't involve shaving off any of the existing tooth. With Lumineers, an ultra-thin layer of porcelain is placed directly over the front of each tooth. "This works if your teeth are already aligned well," says Dr. Rozenberg. "But you have to be a perfect candidate for Lumineers, otherwise teeth end up looking bulky." Dr. Apa agrees that Lumineers are not for everyone. "There is a select group of people that can look good in Lumineers. But for most people, I don't recommend them because they can look boxy," he says. The advantage of Lumineers — which cost about the same as veneers and can last for up to 20 years — is that they are not a lifetime commitment; if you want to have them removed, you still have your teeth intact underneath.

## WHITENING

If your teeth are well-shaped and it's a brighter smile you're after, try whitening. "In-office whitening really has gotten cheaper," says Dr. Rozenberg. "Zoom 2, for example, which they use on Extreme Makeover, uses a halogen light source to bleach teeth by several shades." Dentists may also use blue light sources, lasers or custom-fit trays filled with bleaching gel to lighten teeth. The in-office treatments get the job done and cost anywhere from \$500 to \$1,300 per treatment. Dentists recommend touch-ups every year or so to keep teeth bright. If in-office treatments are too pricey for you, you could try over-the-counter whitening products. The gold standard is Crest Whitestrips. "They really work; they're the most highly researched whitening product," says Dr. Apa. "They contain the same bleaching agent as in-office products but at a much lower percentage." Dr. Rozenberg adds, "If you want to go from yellow to white, it won't happen, but it will lighten your teeth two to four shades." Follow package directions carefully and don't use the product for longer than instructed, otherwise your teeth can become sensitive.



## SPOT TREATMENTS

If you have just a few problem areas, dentists have ways to focus in on those. For instance, if you're concerned about stains or white spots on your teeth, ask your dentist about enamel microabrasion. "We can roughen the top layer of the tooth and then polish the stain right off if it's not too deep," says Dr. Rozenberg. What's more, if you simply want to straighten the bottom line of your teeth, your dentist may be able to reshape them with a drill —almost as you would file down a nail. "There's no need for anesthetic; it doesn't hurt," says Dr. Apa. "It just helps make teeth look straight across."



# ASK RACHEL

Our health director answers your top questions



## DEAR RACHEL

**I'm afraid of public speaking but I need to give a presentation. Any advice?**

A. One way to psych yourself up for a presentation is to use positive visualization. Try this exercise from Dr. Diana Kirschner, author of *Opening Love's Door: The Seven Lessons*. Close your eyes and think of a time when you felt confident and strong. Maybe when you got a promotion or ran a 5K. Remember what you felt like, the sounds you heard and sights you saw. "Make this image bigger and brighter in your mind," says Dr. Kirschner. "This empowered image is your Diamond Self." Repeat this visualization several times until you can easily bring this image to mind. Then, before your presentation, imagine your Diamond Self giving the talk; this should give you the confidence you need.

## DEAR RACHEL

**Is it dangerous to take herbal supplements before surgery?**

Yes, according to the journal *Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery*. "Patients should stop taking certain supplements two weeks before surgery because herbal remedies can put people at increased risk when under anesthesia," says Dr. Zachary Gerut, assistant clinical professor of plastic surgery at Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York. For example, echinacea and ginkgo may lead to excessive bleeding during surgery, St. John's wort may prolong the effects of sedation, and licorice extract can lead to high blood pressure for a patient under anesthesia. "The problem is that 70 percent of patients don't tell their doctors about the herbs they take because they think they are safe." Bottom line: Even natural supplements can cause dangerous interactions. Tell your doctor everything you're taking, especially if you'll be having surgery.