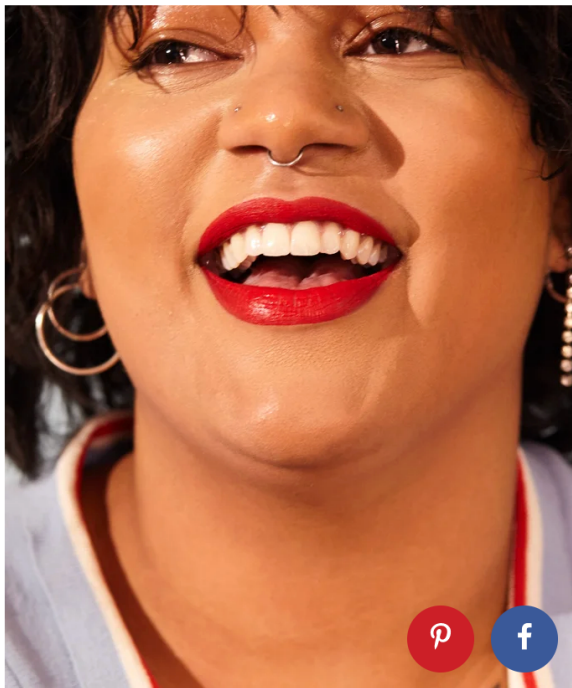


Dentists Think You Should Be Shocked By This Popular Teeth Trend



PHOTOGRAPHED BY NATALIA MANTINI.

Last August, [influencer Jannifer Gao](#) pressed send on a [Tweet](#) that would go viral: “I blame the lack of comprehensive health care and health education for why this veneer crisis is happening,” she wrote. The crisis that Jannifer is referring to is the epidemic of destroyed teeth that dental professionals have been dealing with recently — and it’s all down to the burgeoning popularity of pay-per-tooth services.

You may have come across these teeth services, such as increasingly popular veneers, on social media. [Dental veneers](#) are thin, typically porcelain, composite or zirconia shells attached to the front of the tooth to improve the shape, size and color. More often than not, the enamel

is shaved down during this process, but it isn’t the only aesthetic trend to take over teeth care — and set tongues wagging. There are controversial [dental crowns](#), for example, which require filing teeth down to tiny ‘pegs’ so that they can be fitted on top, not to mention invisible aligners, which gradually straighten teeth.

Teeth are emotional, actually

In fact, experts argue that the pandemic had something to do with the likes of veneers and crowns being sought after cheaply by the masses. “During the pandemic, people stared at themselves on screens for hours a day and noticed how the ‘imperfections’ they hid with closed smiles in photos were quite visible when they spoke,” explains New York-based cosmetic dentist [Dr. Alex Rubinov](#). Dr Rubinov says that the combination of facing one’s ‘flaws’ while being inundated with images of seemingly ‘perfect’ smiles on social media has encouraged people to strive to achieve the look on a budget.

Qualified professionals charge around \$15-\$20k a go for cosmetic teeth procedures. In a bid to save money, people on a mission for ‘better’ teeth are heading abroad and spending as little as \$1000 on a new mouth. Take the TikTok hashtag [#TurkeyTeeth](#), for example. And this is a global issue. A recent [report](#) found that more than 90% of Dentists have examined patients who have travelled abroad for dental services. The report says that 86% have treated patients who have encountered issues post treatment overseas, and people are reporting stomach-churning outcomes.

People are ditching qualified dentists and heading to so-called “mouth shops”

The list of possible complications is very long, and the worst part is that you may not know there is an issue until it’s too late — particularly where crowns are concerned. “Unlike a [bad haircut](#) or color, you can’t grow a tooth back,” says Dr Rubinov. There’s also a possibility for an excessive amount of decay under the crown and a possibility that the tooth may need to be extracted entirely later down the line. Dr Rubinov adds that someone who isn’t experienced or properly trained has too many opportunities to make these mistakes.

But here’s the terrifying part: “The material itself is so dense that you can’t drill it off. I go through two or three drills — the motors *and* the drills — just to get a full mouth of that shit off,” he says vehemently. Once the veneers are successfully removed, they have to then be replaced with temporary ones, with the goal of getting to permanent ones in the future. But your teeth health will never be the same, hints Dr Rubinov.