



ask the DENTIST

Got a question for a dentist?

If you have a question you would like answered by a Ministry of Health-approved dentist, send it to us at enquiries.anjar@gmail.com. This issue, your questions are answered by Imperial Dental Specialist Centre's orthodontist, implantologist, oral surgeon, aesthetics and laser dentist, Dato' Dr. How Kim Chuan and Dr. Ariel Loke.

SHAPES OF WOE

I have oddly shaped teeth! Not only are they square looking, they're short and poorly spaced. I have Googled my predicament and understand that my best option would be braces. Although I am open to the idea, my wallet definitely isn't. Are there other options for better looking teeth that don't break the bank? Please help!

Gus, PJ

Answer:

From the description above, I suppose you have short clinical teeth with generalised spacing. There are a few treatment options for spacing teeth. For cosmetic purposes, a minor gap in between your teeth can be filled with tooth-coloured dental filling or porcelain veneers. However, if your teeth are unfavourable for dental bonding and veneers, for instance, if they are crooked or the gaps are too wide, orthodontic treatment is a better option.

On the other hand, short clinical crowns can be due to a few reasons such as toothwear and insufficient eruption which can

be treated with laser gingivectomy, crown lengthening or orthodontic extrusion. You can discuss this with your dentist and discuss on a proper treatment plan for your condition.



CAVITY QUEEN

I am a 23-year old student who is in dire need of dental treatment. I recently went to the dentist and he told me that I have three cavities. I also have bad breath brought on by gingivitis. While I am desperately seeking treatment, I have limited money to spare. How can I undergo regular dental care if I can't afford it? Are there other resources available for students such as myself?

SS, Shah Alam

Answer:

If you are having cavities and gingivitis, it is really important that you seek dental treatment as soon as possible to prevent the disease from getting worse. If private dental treatment is not viable, you can seek treatment at government clinics whose charges are more affordable. A dental care regime doesn't have to cost you a bomb. All you need is to brush your teeth with fluoridated toothpaste, floss and gargle with mouth rinse twice a day, and not to forget to go for a dental checkup every six months.



TOOTHPASTE POSER

Whenever I go to the pharmacy to buy toothpaste, the many types always puzzle me. Some are for whitening, bad breath or cavity protection while others claim to minimise tooth sensitivity. Are these claims even real and how can I choose the best type of toothpaste based on my needs?

AJ, Selangor

Answer:

I think a lot of people face the same problem as you. The options for toothpaste can be overwhelming. Toothpaste is the main part of daily oral hygiene care, which removes plaque and food debris from your teeth and gums. The essential ingredient of toothpaste is fluoride, which helps in cavity prevention and strengthens our teeth. There are many types of toothpaste such as cavity prevention toothpaste which contains fluoride; whitening toothpaste which contain light abrasive materials that remove stains. Tartar control and gum protection formulas contain ingredients to prevent plaque adherence; and hypersensitivity toothpaste contain ingredients to block the stimulus from irritating the nerves. Before you choose your toothpaste, take a moment to ask yourself or consult with your dentist whether you are having problems such as hypersensitivity, bleeding gums, stains, cavities or bad breath. Then you can choose your toothpaste based on your needs.