

## Ways To A White Christmas...

Recently, the results from a survey conducted by the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry crossed my desk. This survey had some interesting results that caught my eye.

-Ninety-six percent of adults think that an attractive smile appeals to the opposite sex.

-Ninety-nine point seven percent of adults (virtually everyone) value a smile as an important social asset.

-Three out of four respondents believed an unattractive smile can hurt a person's chance for career success.

So what does this all mean? Looking at the big picture, this survey shows that teeth and smiles matter. A healthy smile not only boosts self-esteem, but also improves the perception of others...just one more reason to keep those check-ups going. There are several ways to achieve that perfect smile.

Believe it or not, a beautiful smile starts with healthy gums. The periodontium (bone and gums) are the foundation of our teeth. Infected, swollen, bleeding, puffy gums do not help to frame a pretty smile. On top of that, the best dental work in the world cannot overcome an unhealthy mouth. The first step to great teeth is great gums.

Almost all fine art starts with a clean palette. A beautiful smile is certainly a work of art. Esthetic dentistry almost always starts with some type of tooth whitening to return the teeth to their natural shade. This can be accomplished in a single visit to the dental office (in-office tooth bleaching) or at home with customized trays that are worn nightly. Both procedures will whiten teeth very well.

Once the teeth are white, a variety of procedures may be performed to correct the size, shape, and arrangement of the teeth. Old crowns (caps) can be replaced with tooth colored, natural light reflecting, ceramic materials. It is amazing how technology can improve those old front caps and their unsightly gray gum lines. Stained tooth colored fillings can be replaced with newer materials that can be polished smoother and shinier. Finally, porcelain tooth colored veneers (imagine a new glass front designed to look like a perfect tooth) can correct a variety of problems such as internal staining, rotated teeth, size discrepancies, and even gaps (diastemas). A good dentist and a great lab can do amazing things to achieve that perfect smile.

Remember, Santa's not the only one that can supply those two front teeth. Until next week, keep smiling.

-Please send comments to Drs. Parrish at [www.ParrishDental.com](http://www.ParrishDental.com).