



Changing Peoples' Lives...

BY ASH PARMAR

Following on from last month, I would like to take each topic I mentioned, and expand in more detail. So, this month, let's look at NEED vs WANT dentistry. What types of dental treatment do people NEED? Which are the most popular treatments that people WANT?

DENTAL TREATMENT THAT PEOPLE NEED

When I look at my day-to-day work as a dentist, the following are the most common dental procedures that people need: -

- Gum treatment
- Relief of pain (toothache or abscess)
- Fixing a broken tooth or filling
- Extraction (e.g. a loose tooth or badly broken tooth)

Many people go to the dentist when they have a problem such

as the above. However, people do not realize that most problems in the mouth can actually be AVOIDED. My approach to helping people is to first educate them about how harmful plaque is. Plaque is in everyone's mouth and contains bacteria, which can cause gum disease, decay and bad breath. So it makes sense to remove plaque every day to ensure healthy, clean gums and avoidance of future treatment. This can only happen by having an excellent oral hygiene routine on a daily basis at home, as well as seeing a hygienist for professional gum maintenance every four to six months.

If someone presents with a small cavity or broken filling, it is far better to redo this early so that the problem does not get worse. If ignored, the decay will reach the nerve in the middle of

the tooth, and result in a painful abscess. The treatment at this point is time consuming, complex and more expensive.

DENTAL TREATMENT THAT PEOPLE WANT

There are two main types of treatment that people want, rather than need i.e.

- Better-looking smile
- Improvement in function

Braces are increasingly becoming popular because we can move teeth in to the perfect position to create an attractive smile. However, treatment can take time (e.g. 6 months to 2 years) and requires a lot of commitment from the individual.

Other popular cosmetic treatments include teeth whitening, white fillings and porcelain veneers. Everyone is different, and it is important to

have a very detailed dental assessment with an experienced dentist before you make your decision on the best option or solution for you.

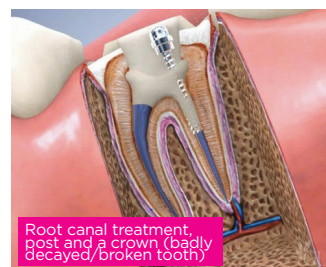
Eating food (especially harder things) can become really difficult if a person has many missing teeth. Some people can get on well with removable dentures, whilst others cannot even think about this (the vision of the denture going in a glass at night is simply too much!). Dental implants are the perfect answer to having fixed teeth again (i.e. to replace one missing tooth, a group of teeth, or an entire arch of missing teeth). Treatment is comfortable, and the end result can be life changing!



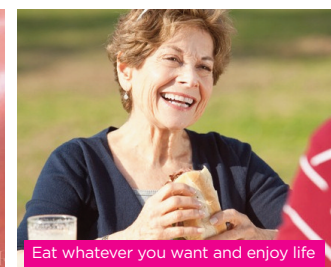
An old amalgam filling



Replacement white filling



Root canal treatment, post and a crown (badly decayed/broken tooth)



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