

L I V I N G W I T H

August 2004

panache

A close-up photograph of a woman with long, wavy blonde hair and blue eyes, smiling warmly. She is wearing a dark, thin-strapped top. The background is a blue-toned image with white circuit board patterns.

**Hot Springs,
Arkansas**
*Thermal Baths
Enhance Holiday*

Bath Retreats
*No More Boring
Bathrooms*

Cool Flavors
Inspire Beach Menus

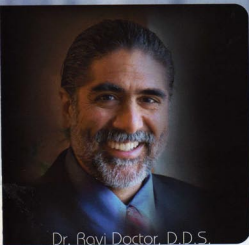
GET A
SENSATIONAL SMILE

From the Latest Dental Technology

Dr. Ravi Doctor, D.D.S.

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BY HENRY M. STEWART, SPECIAL TO THE STARTELEGRAM

Ever wish you could stun your friends and family with a smile of perfect pearly whites like those flashed by Tom Cruise, Catherine Zeta-Jones or other Hollywood celebrities on Entertainment Tonight or in People Magazine? Do you daydream of having a younger, more appealing, smile that helps you regain a little of what Mother Nature and Father Time have stolen away?

Well, here's some news that will brighten your day, and your smile. Dr. Ravi Doctor (yes, he really is Dr. Doctor) can revamp your look by improving your smile with a complete dental makeover. Dr. Doctor, who holds a doctorate in dental surgery from the University of Texas Health Science Center in San Antonio, and has maintained his practice in Arlington for more than 15 years, knows how to give you that Hollywood smile. Restorative and cosmetic dentistry are his specialty.

"We see a lot of patients who are unhappy with the aesthetics of their teeth. Maybe they're a little crooked or stained, or they have a noticeable overbite or underbite," said Dr. Doctor. "They sometimes think it's just a matter of fixing the front two teeth. In most cases, we need to restore six or eight upper and lower teeth, or even do a full-mouth restoration because that's what's needed to ensure a healthy smile as well as a beautiful smile."

He said the basic problem usually involves more than a couple of crooked teeth. Often, the lower jaw is misaligned, causing multiple problems. A properly done dental makeover, he cautions, addresses "a lot more than cosmetics."

"First, we do a complete exam and bite analysis to see how the teeth come together, or don't," he said. "We look for problems like a lot of wear on the teeth or bone loss. Both conditions can be caused by grinding the teeth during sleep."

"We ask patients if they have problems opening or closing their mouths. Do they have trouble biting into an apple or hamburger? Do they hear a popping noise when they chew? Do they wake up with sore teeth or have frequent headaches?"

"Yes" answers to these questions point to severe stress on the TMJ (temporal mandibular joint), the jaw's hinge. Stress the TMJ too much and the jaw can literally lock open, leaving the patient unable to close their mouth.

"We usually start therapy with a splint (a clear plastic mouth piece worn during sleep) to stretch and relax the muscles around the TMJ and move the jaw into correct position so the upper and lower teeth meet properly when the mouth closes," Dr. Doctor explained. "This is the ideal base for a perfect smile with no damaging stress on the TMJ. Not only is the patient on the way to looking better, they feel better."

Next, Dr. Doctor addresses each tooth that needs restoration with a selection of therapies, usually a full or partial crown or veneer made from a high quality, biocompatible and plaque-resistant ceramic material that matches the natural color of the other teeth. He uses a computer-aided process called CEREC to measure, design and create natural-looking restorations. Thanks to these high technology tools, he can do a single tooth restoration in about an hour while the patient waits.

The result is restored teeth that are not only repositioned, straighter and brighter, they're usually a little longer than before treatment.

"As we age, our teeth become shorter due to natural wear. An important part of a dental makeover is restoring their original length," explained Dr. Doctor. "When your teeth are the right length and in the right position, you have a beautiful smile, and your bite functions properly."

He adds that the benefits of a complete dental makeover often extend beyond an arresting smile and improved dental health. The longer, restored teeth and repositioned jaw tend to work "almost like a facelift."

"With a full-mouth reconstruction case, we usually see a few wrinkles and creases around the mouth disappear. That's a bonus

