

What can be done without wearing braces?

Orthodontics can be a lengthy process. Some patients prefer to have crowns or veneers fitted to their teeth instead in order to mask the irregularity. Whether this is feasible in any particular case needs good professional advice

Veneers are added to the front surface of the teeth to mask the irregularity. The teeth can be reduced in size and crowns or "caps" can be fitted to give a larger change in appearance. These approaches also allow defects in the tooth surface to be hidden.

These restorative approaches offer the attraction of rapid results and may be the treatment of choice in some cases. Drawbacks that you need to be aware of are:

- the preparation of the teeth is, to a greater or lesser extent, a destructive and irreversible process
 - the crowns or veneers cannot be expected to last indefinitely and the need for replacements over the years should be borne in mind
 - there are definite limits to the amount of irregularity which can be tackled successfully in this way. Veneers can become excessively thick, crowns can only be reshaped by a limited extent
 - there may be adverse effects on the underlying gum tissues over the years from having the edges of the crowns or veneers close by
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