

# What's in Your Aesthetic Dentistry Toolkit?



**BLOG**

By Dr. Phil Klein | Viva Learning

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In today's social media-fueled world, simple snapshots that in the past would have only been seen by a handful of people can now be quickly shared far and wide. It's no wonder your patients put such a premium on looking their best! When they smile for the camera, they want the confidence of knowing that their teeth look good. With aesthetic dentistry you can help your patients achieve the beautiful smiles that they want.

## Aesthetic dentistry can be very profitable

However, offering aesthetic dentistry isn't just good for your patients. It's also good for your practice. For example, Dr. Sarah Winter, a dentist who has taught aesthetic dentistry and published articles for several dental periodicals, finds that general dentistry is not what drives production at her La Jolla, California practice. "I have about half of my day that's aesthetic dentistry," she shares. "Overwhelmingly that aesthetic dentistry is what drives the profitability of the practice."

One of the reasons for this has to do with how aesthetic dentistry is treated by dental insurance companies. "Aesthetic dentistry," Dr. Winter points out, "tends not to be bound by the same insurance parameters and fees that a lot of the other services that we provide are."

## You need to build an aesthetic dentistry toolkit

Dr. Winter advises that if you're going to do aesthetic dentistry you need to have a "toolkit" that enables you to use aesthetic dentistry as a practice builder. Here's what she thinks that "toolkit" should contain...

- **Knowledge** – Knowledge is key. Dr. Winter believes that you "need to have a really good understanding of composite, the different types of ceramics that are available, and then the non-invasive products like resin infiltration (or Icon (DMG), specifically)."

It is also helpful to be able to offer teeth straightening using clear aligners. Once they are out of high school, most people who have crooked teeth – especially those who care greatly about aesthetics – do not want to be seen in traditional orthodontic braces.

- **An excellent lab** – While many of today's dentists are milling their indirect restorations chairside, after doing the intraoral scan Dr. Winter prefers to send aesthetic ceramic cases out to a lab. This is why she feels that having a great lab to be able to offer the different ceramics is so important.
- **Resin infiltration** – Resin infiltration is a non-invasive way to treat white spot lesions, such as what you often see after orthodontics or fluorosis. Quite often people have been living with – and feeling bothered by – these unsightly but relatively superficial spots for years. Sometimes this is because they did not know that treatment was available. Other times it is because some of the treatment approaches that have been tried in the past, such as massaging in MI paste, were not effective.

Dr. Winter has found that treating these lesions with DMG's Icon, a minimally invasive option that does not involve removing any tooth structure, is much more effective than other treatments. In fact, she uses resin infiltration with DMG's Icon quite often. Anytime she sees those white spot lesions, Dr. Winter offers this as a treatment option.

"I love resin infiltration!" she exclaims. "I love it because most patients have been told that there's not much they could do about it. When you ask them, 'Does this bother you?' they say, 'Yeah, it has bothered me.' To be able to give this really, really easy, non-invasive, relatively quick solution to those lesions that have bothered them can be very rewarding."

- **Ability to set expectations** – Dr. Winter is a big fan of setting expectations, because she has seen that having those conversations on the front end can create a much happier patient across the board.

“When it comes specifically to resin infiltration,” she notes, “I never want to overpromise. I explain that we can definitely lessen the contrast. I can make it blend better. I cannot guarantee I can get rid of it. And if this doesn’t work, then we can talk about next steps and different options that are going to get you there.”

- **Whitening** – When setting expectations regarding resin infiltration, Dr. Winter also likes to educate her patients that if she takes away the super-white spots, one of the things that can happen is that the patient’s teeth can look less bright. Whitening can address this. “That’s part of my conversation,” she says, “before I jump in, I do recommend whitening their teeth, usually before we do the Icon treatment. And if they’re not interested before and they want to do it down the road, that’s fine, too.”

Remember, not everyone is a great candidate for veneers. But sometimes you can help a patient reach their goal of an improved smile through a combination of resin infiltration and whitening instead of veneers. And, if you don’t already have one, adding an in-house 3D printing bleaching workflow (DMG DentaMile) to your practice’s services can become a source of additive revenue.

## Conclusion

When you think about the types of services the Dr. Winter provides, you see another reason why offering aesthetic dentistry can help you build your practice. This has to do with the power of both word-of-mouth advertising and building a social media following.

If you can give your patients the beautiful smile they want – especially when you can do this in a budget-friendly, non-invasive way – you can bet that they will spread the word to their friends, neighbors and family members. Plus, Dr. Winter observes, “When you post your cases [on social media], a lot of people start to come to you saying, ‘Oh, I’ve had that too. I need that on all my teeth.’”