



Kenneth J. Canzoneri, D.D.S

Q: Is it true that oral cancer is very prevalent in men and how do I look for it?

A: Yes, it is true. Oral cancer has become the sixth leading cancer among men and is also increasing in young adults. The good news is that if found early enough the survival rate is very high. Your dentist or dental hygienist should do a yearly oral cancer exam. The FDA recently cleared the VELscope system, a breakthrough technology, to assist dental professionals in discovering cancerous and precancerous growths that may not be apparent to the naked eye. The VELscope utilizes a safe, high energy, blue light with specialized filtering to evaluate the oral tissue for abnormal areas. It is completely free of any pain or discomfort.

Q: I am going to a friend's wedding and want to bleach my teeth but I am worried that the bleaching material will damage my teeth. What should I do?

A: I am asked this question in my office at least 4 times a week. Teeth whitening when done correctly, is safe and it does not damage the surface of your teeth. Bleaching gels can cause some degree of tooth sensitivity but there are now desensitizing gels which can reduce the amount of sensitivity you may experience.

Q: I haven't smiled in years due to my ugly teeth and I want to get veneers. I am nervous because some of my friend's porcelain veneers look fake.

A: This is a complicated question which could take pages to explain. The simple answer is to find an experienced dentist and dental laboratory. In my opinion a high quality dental lab that can fabricate realistic veneers may be more important than the dentist. The best idea is to ask to see photos of patients that the doctor and the lab have completed. Websites with before and after photos may be a good source.

Q: Someone told me that it is normal for your teeth to wear down as you age, is this true?

A: The answer is a definite, no. The wearing down of your teeth is considered an abnormal condition. Dentists refer to this 'occlusal disease.' In my office we have number of 80 year-old patients who have beautiful, long, healthy teeth. Occlusal disease is a serious condition that causes unnatural wear and damage to teeth. A few of the signs of occlusal disease are: jaw joint noise and pain, chipping front teeth, gum recession, tooth sensitivity to cold, notches in the teeth at the gum line, fractured fillings and teeth, with damage on your back chewing teeth.

Q: I haven't been to the dentist in a few years. I know that I have some old fillings and cavities but I am afraid that the dentist is going to drill my good teeth away.

A: I feel strongly that with the advances in, what dentists refer to as, adhesive dentistry, the preservation of tooth structure must be the goal of every dental professional. The advances in technology such as lasers, drills that are faster with less vibration, electric drills, digital x-rays, bonded fillings and porcelain have dramatically improved a dentist's ability to take away the diseased portion of the tooth without harming the healthy tooth structure.

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