



Dr Martina Hodgson

# HEALTHY SMILES

How to keep your smile looking young – dentist Dr Martina Hodgson shares her guidance for timeless beauty

**Y**our smile might not be the first thing you think about when considering anti-ageing treatments, but with new research showing a link between the inflammation caused by poor oral health and a whole host of problems including cardiovascular disease, diabetes and cancer, knowing how to care for your teeth and gums in the long-term has never been more important.

Having missing, chipped or stained teeth and inflamed, receding gums can all have a huge impact on the way you look and feel, and the temptation to jump on the next flight to Turkey for a new set of low-cost gnashers may be real. But the biological price you pay will be high. Gone are the days when a full

set of toilet-bowl white porcelain crowns are the first choice to improve a patient's smile. Enamel that has been drilled away can never grow back and the highly invasive nature of such procedures inevitably means further complex and costly reparation work further down the line.

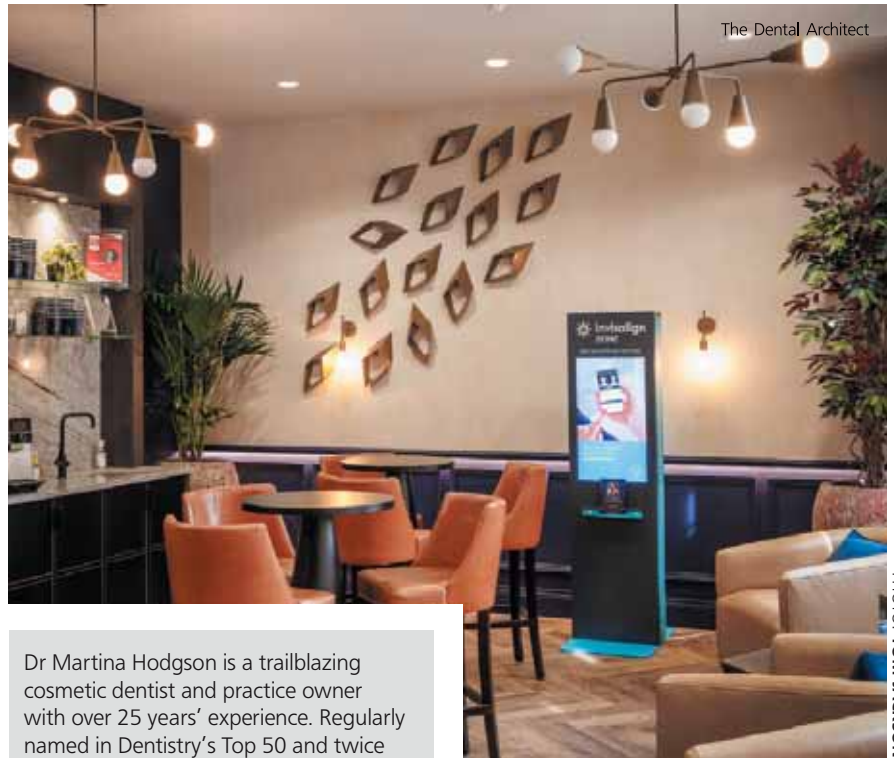
Any dentist worth their salt will encourage a patient to opt for the least invasive option when it comes to a smile boost. Keep it simple with a trip to the hygienist to remove plaque and staining, or treat yourself to some teeth whitening, which when overseen by a dental professional is harmless to your teeth.

If that doesn't quite hit the spot, then you can consider drill-free treatments such as teeth straightening with clear aligners or composite bonding. Bonding is currently

having a moment due to its ability to safely repair worn-down enamel and remodel teeth to a more pleasing shape in a single session, without an injection in sight.

Missing teeth can be replaced with dentures, bridges or dental implants, restoring function as well as beauty and allowing you to get back to eating the foods you love. Only as a last resort when the teeth are heavily restored or the enamel quality is poor, would we consider more invasive treatments such as veneers or crowns.

The old saying 'prevention is better than cure' certainly rings true when it comes to a youthful smile, and by looking after your gums and teeth in the right way you can prevent the need for extensive dental work in the future. Regular check-ins with your dentist



The Dental Architect

PHOTO: TOM JACKSON

Dr Martina Hodgson is a trailblazing cosmetic dentist and practice owner with over 25 years' experience. Regularly named in Dentistry's Top 50 and twice awarded UK Dentist of the Year (highly commended), her two dental practices have also received multiple national awards and are renowned for their exceptional level of patient care and clinical excellence.

She is among the top one per cent of Invisalign providers in Europe, Middle East and Africa, and her newest Leeds venture, The Dental Architect has won UK Practice of the Year twice since it opened in 2022. She has lectured internationally, has a well-known passion for education, coaching and mentoring, and is on a mission to improve awareness about dental health and beauty.

will complement brushing your teeth twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste.

Minimise cavity-inducing sugar in your diet and be aware of the staining effects of coffee and red wine (which the hygienist can easily polish off). Ask your dentist to check your bite for signs of damage and take a trip to see an experienced cosmetic dentist if you feel you want something a little extra as cosmetic treatments aren't available on the NHS.

While a healthy and beautiful smile starts at home, modern dentistry can offer life-changing benefits beyond just appearance, with the ability to improve your overall health and wellbeing. Whether you're seeking a more youthful smile, straighter teeth, or a complete smile makeover, it is possible to achieve the confidence and appearance you deserve without huge damage to your enamel or your wallet.

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### 5 TIPS TO ANTI-AGE YOUR SMILE:

**1. Guided biofilm therapy** – Like a spa treatment for your teeth, this soothing, high-tech approach to a professional cleaning not only feels great but ensures you leave with a healthier, fresher smile.

**2. Teeth whitening** – This should always be carried out by a dental professional and is an affordable, non-invasive and instant way to glow-up your smile.

**3. Use an electric toothbrush** – A toothbrush that alerts you when you scrub your gums too hard will help prevent the ageing appearance of gum recession. Brush twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste to prevent cavities.

**4. Wear a nightguard** – Tooth wear caused by grinding your teeth at night can lead to premature ageing of your teeth and costly dental bills down the line. Wearing a nightguard can help prevent this.

**5. Clear aligners** – Crowded teeth can be an aesthetic problem and if your teeth don't bite together in the right way, can lead to long-term damage. Clear aligners, like Invisalign, can gently straighten your teeth without the use of traditional metal braces, offering a discreet, comfortable way to achieve a more youthful smile.