



“IT’S SO MUCH MORE FUN BECAUSE WE’RE DOING WHAT PEOPLE WANT; NOT WHAT THEY HAVE TO DO.”

- DR. GORMAN

## THE STORY BEHIND THE SMILE

Malcom Forbes said, “One of the ceaseless wonders of the world is the power of a smile.” And he was right; a fetching smile can open doors, inspire romance, clinch deals... even land an upgrade to First Class. But when genetics or wear-and-tear impede a winning grin, aesthetic dentistry could be the silver bullet.

“Cosmetic dentistry is about making teeth look better,” says Dr. Steven Gorman of the Gorman Center for Fine Dentistry in North Oaks, “but they don’t necessarily look natural. Take the person who wants refrigerator-white teeth – they don’t care if anybody knows it’s artificial. But aesthetic dentistry is beautiful, natural-looking dentistry. We look at a patient’s teeth and consider what we can enhance to make it look like it’s still their smile, not some smile we imported.”

To create a natural smile, Gorman adheres to the universal design mantra *form follows function*. That means blending aesthetics into the overall

spectrum of oral healthcare. “First, I want to know what a patient’s looking for,” he says. “Then I’ll do a comprehensive examination to look at everything – jaw joints and muscles, the bite, teeth, gum tissue, old dentistry and health issues.” With over 25 years of experience in blending traditional and cosmetic dentistry, Dr. Gorman says understanding how the parts interact to create the whole is the key to designing a smile that complements a patient’s facial features and functions seamlessly. “If I know what you’re looking for and I know your mouth, then it’s easy to recommend a treatment.”

Aesthetic treatments include tooth whitening and ceramic porcelain veneers, ceramic porcelain crowns and bridges, metal-free restorations to replace metal fillings, and dental implants. From general dentistry to full-mouth restoration, The Gorman Center’s custom designs feature state-of-the-art materials that coordinate with jaw joints, tooth sizes and existing tooth color for a natural result. >>

Unlike most facilities, the Gorman Center has an on-site partner, Jimenez Dental Laboratory, to fabricate the aesthetic replacements, onlays and implants. “Most lab work is done in commercial labs,” says Gorman. “That means you send it out with all the instructions and depend on someone interpreting them. There’s always a chance for communication breakdown.” But Jimenez Dental Laboratory is involved with the Gorman Center’s cases from the beginning. “[The ceramist] will meet the patients the first time they’re here and once a patient realizes that he’s going to be making their teeth, it’s easier for them to get specific about what they want.”

Gorman solicits his patients’ input throughout the entire process. Through digital smile imaging – modifying a “before” photo to simulate proposed changes – patients can see their “after” shot before committing to a treatment. And further into the process, patients are fitted with wearable prototypes of the final restoration, giving them a chance to experience the end result and suggest changes right up to the time of final placement. “They get to see what it looks like in their mouth,” Gorman says. “They have control over the situation and if there’s something that doesn’t look right we can change it.”

Because most aesthetic procedures are not covered by typical dental insurance, patients are usually required to foot the bill. To that end, the Gorman Center offers interest-free financing options through outside sources. Savvy travelers pick up extra miles by using their frequent flier credit cards, and some patients spread the cost across a combination of financing options.

Along with payment flexibility, there’s often some play in designing a treatment protocol. “A lot of times, if someone needs a full-mouth rehabilitation we don’t have to do it all at once. We can do the upper front teeth that they came in for in the first place. It’s a lot more flexible and a lot more personal.”

Giving patients control over design, implementation and payment options flies in the face of conventional dental practices, but Dr. Gorman says it facilitates more comprehensive dental care. “Most baby boomers grew up with tooth-to-tooth dentistry. We had a cavity, we got a filling. We ended up with a gold crown here, a porcelain crown there and two silver fillings there. Nothing was ever planned ahead of time. But we try to do things so we’ll have less of a problem to deal with later.”

And empowering patients seems to work for everyone. “It’s much easier to practice dentistry this way,” Gorman says, “and it’s so much more fun because we’re doing what people want; not what they have to do. It’s a better way to do dentistry.” ■



*This page:* Dr. Gorman (Photographer Danny Seipp), Before treatment next to computer enhanced image *Opposite page:* After Dr. Gorman’s treatment (Photos supplied by The Gorman Center)

