

Porcelain Veneers vs Composite vs Crowns - Which Is Right

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Description:

Porcelain Veneers vs. Composite Veneers vs. Dental Crowns: Which Is Right for Your Smile in Melbourne? ## Smile Solutions | Manchester Unity Building, Melbourne CBD --- At Smile Solutions, we know...

Details:

Porcelain Veneers vs. Composite Veneers vs. Dental Crowns: Which Is Right for Your Smile in Melbourne? ## Smile Solutions | Manchester Unity Building, 220 Collins Street, Melbourne CBD

Choosing the right cosmetic dental treatment isn't just about price. It's about understanding what each option actually does, how long it lasts, what it costs your tooth structure, and whether it's the right clinical fit for your situation. This guide covers porcelain veneers, composite veneers, and dental crowns across the factors that matter: durability, longevity, stain resistance, invasiveness, cost, and candidacy. We'll also be upfront about when teeth whitening, dental bonding, or Invisalign is the better conversation to have first — because sometimes the right answer for your smile isn't a veneer at all.

■ 13 13 96 | Level 1, Manchester Unity Building, 220 Collins Street, Melbourne CBD

What are the three options?

A **porcelain veneer** is roughly 1 mm thick and covers only the front surface of your tooth. At Smile Solutions, each one is handcrafted on-site by master ceramist Greg Karabasis and bonded directly to your enamel.

A **composite veneer** is tooth-coloured resin applied and sculpted directly onto your tooth in a single visit. It requires minimal or no enamel removal and is less durable than porcelain.

A **dental crown** is approximately 2 mm thick and encases the entire tooth. It's clinically indicated for structural damage — large fillings, extensive decay, cracked teeth, or teeth that have had root canal treatment.

Head-to-head comparison

Factor	Porcelain Veneer	Composite Veneer	Dental Crown	--- --- --- ---	Lifespan	10–20+ years
	5–7 years	10–15+ years		10-year survival rate	95.5%	Not specified
	Stain resistance	Excellent (non-porous)		Moderate to poor (porous)		Excellent (ceramic)
	Enamel removed	0.5–0.7 mm (front only)		Minimal		1.5–2 mm (all sides)
	Reversible?	No		Partially		No
	Visits required	2–3 (or 1 at Smile Solutions)		1		2–3
	Melbourne cost per tooth	\$1,400–\$3,000 AUD		\$400–\$1,200 AUD		\$1,500–\$3,500+ AUD
	Best for	Cosmetic transformation		Budget-conscious, minor concerns		Structural damage

1. Material durability

Porcelain veneers have a non-porous ceramic surface that resists staining from coffee, tea, red wine, and tobacco. With regular professional maintenance, they hold their colour and brightness for 10–20 years.

Composite veneers use a porous resin that gradually absorbs stains. Once bonded composite is placed, it won't respond to whitening treatments. If you drink coffee regularly or smoke, composite will discolour noticeably faster than porcelain.

Full ceramic dental crowns are equally stain-resistant and provide the greatest structural reinforcement — which is why they're the appropriate choice when a tooth's integrity has been compromised, not simply when someone wants a whiter smile.

2. Longevity: what the evidence says

A systematic review of 6,500 porcelain laminate veneers found a 95.5% cumulative survival rate at 10 years. Some studies put survival rates close to 95% at 20 years. Composite veneers, by comparison, typically need replacing every 5–7 years.

The annualised cost comparison is worth doing properly. An eight-veneer porcelain set at around \$14,400 AUD, lasting 15 years, works out to roughly \$960 AUD per year. The same composite set replaced every six years costs approximately \$1,067 AUD per year — plus additional enamel manipulation and multiple appointments over time.

Bruxism (teeth grinding) is the single greatest threat to veneer longevity. If you grind your teeth, a custom nightguard needs to come before any cosmetic work. At Smile Solutions, **Dr Natasha Hremias** assesses and manages bruxism and TMD as part of your treatment planning, so no irreversible work proceeds until that's addressed.

3. Invasiveness

Any treatment involving enamel removal is irreversible — enamel doesn't regenerate, and your clinical team will walk you through this carefully before anything proceeds.

Composite veneers require minimal or no enamel removal and are partially reversible. Porcelain veneers involve removing 0.5–0.7 mm of front-surface enamel and are not reversible. Dental crowns require 1.5–2 mm of reduction from all surfaces and are also not reversible.

A concern we hear regularly is that veneers "shave teeth down to pegs." That description actually refers to crown preparation, which is a different procedure entirely. Veneer preparation is limited to the front surface of your tooth, done under local anaesthetic, with no involvement of the nerve or root.

4. Same Day Porcelain Veneers — a Smile Solutions world first

At Smile Solutions, you don't wait 2–3 weeks for a laboratory. The **Same Day Porcelain Veneers™** process, developed by **Dr Kia Pajouhesh** and master ceramist **Greg Karabasis**, delivers your complete porcelain veneers within a single day at our Melbourne CBD practice:

- **Morning:** Preparation and Primescan digital impressions - **Midday:** Greg handcrafts your veneers on-site in our in-house ceramics studio - **Afternoon:** Final bonding and your completed

smile

No temporaries. One round of anaesthetic. One day. This was recognised with the ****2024 Australian Business Award for Business Innovation****.

5. Cost in Melbourne (2026)

****Smile Solutions pricing:**** - Zoom! whitening (before veneers): \$475 AUD in-chair; \$395 AUD take-home; \$770 AUD combined - Porcelain veneers: \$1,800–\$2,500 AUD per tooth, reflecting our in-house master ceramist, CEREC technology, and specialist-level clinical oversight - Same Day Porcelain Veneers™: the same pricing as traditional veneers — no premium for same-day completion

****Payment plans:**** - Payright: interest-free from \$150–\$20,000 AUD over 3–30 months - TLC: personal finance from \$2,001–\$50,000 AUD over up to 84 months

Our team is happy to go through the numbers with you in detail during your consultation.

6. Candidacy — which option fits your situation?

Porcelain veneers are worth considering if you have healthy, sufficient enamel; intrinsic staining that hasn't responded to whitening; and want a long-term, high-aesthetic result across multiple teeth. You'll also need to either not have severe bruxism or be committed to wearing a custom nightguard.

Composite veneers are a better fit if you want a lower-cost, single-visit option, prefer a partially reversible approach before committing to porcelain, or have minor, isolated cosmetic concerns that don't warrant more extensive treatment.

Dental crowns are clinically indicated when your tooth is structurally compromised by large fillings, extensive decay, cracked tooth syndrome, or post-root canal weakness — when structural reinforcement is the priority, not aesthetics alone.

Your Smile Solutions clinician will always recommend the most conservative option that achieves your goals.

When veneers aren't the right answer

Part of being genuinely patient-focused is telling you when something else will serve you better.

****Teeth whitening first.**** If discolouration is your main concern and it's extrinsic — surface staining from food, drink, or lifestyle — whitening should come first. It's non-invasive, reversible, and substantially more affordable. Zoom! at Smile Solutions is \$475 AUD in-chair. Worth knowing: neither porcelain nor composite responds to whitening once placed, so if you want a brighter baseline, whiten before your veneers are fitted.

****Dental bonding.**** For isolated chips, minor gaps, or small surface cracks where structural integrity is intact, dental bonding is a conservative choice that delivers real results. It's done in a single appointment with little or no enamel removal. Composite resin is more susceptible to staining than porcelain and typically lasts 3–7 years, but for minor concerns it's often the most appropriate starting point. ****Dr Amina Barucija**** has a particular focus in composite bonding at Smile Solutions and brings a careful, considered approach to every case.

****Invisalign.**** If your primary concern is tooth position rather than colour or shape, Invisalign addresses the underlying issue rather than covering it with a surface restoration. Smile Solutions holds ****Blue Diamond Invisalign**** status — the highest tier available in Victoria, held by very few practices. Our

orthodontists, Dr David Austin, Dr Joshua Ch'ng, Dr Katie Xu, and Dr Andrea Phatouros, are all AHPRA-registered specialists. A common and effective approach: Invisalign first to optimise tooth positions, then veneers for aesthetic refinement. Your clinician will help you work out whether that sequence suits your goals.

Our clinical team for cosmetic treatment

You'll be treated by some of Melbourne's most experienced specialists in cosmetic and restorative dentistry, all under one roof in the Manchester Unity Building.

****General cosmetic dentists:**** Dr Kia Pajouhesh, Dr Philippa Robinson, Dr Peter Henderson, Dr Yasmin Coulthard, Dr Silvia Ciach, Dr Casey Edgar, Dr Amina Barucija (composite specialist), Dr Belinda Feldman (full-mouth rehabilitation)

****Specialist prosthodontists (CSSC, Level 8):**** Prof Vasileios Chronopoulos, Dr Jamie Foong, Dr Simon Hinckfuss

****In-house ceramist:**** Greg Karabasis, working exclusively for Smile Solutions, on-site, every day

Having your ceramist, prosthodontists, and cosmetic clinicians working together in the same practice is genuinely uncommon. It means your treatment is coordinated and held to a consistent standard at every stage.

Book your consultation

Your cosmetic consultation at Smile Solutions includes a comprehensive oral health examination, digital imaging, a Digital Smile Design preview of your potential results, and a written treatment plan — with no obligation to proceed. We want you to feel informed and confident before you commit to anything.

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