

“GUMMY SMILE”

can be described as excessive exposure of gums while smiling that attracts observer’s eyes as an abnormal finding.

VARIOUS REASONS FOR ‘GUMMY LOOK’

A. Hereditary pattern plays a major role, as one of the parents having such problem can pass it to the child as it is! (one cannot stop it, by any kind of precaution)
B. Uneven balance between facial bones, especially the lower third of the face bearing upper jawbone called Maxilla and lower jaw bone called Mandible.
C. Particular childhood habits like thumb sucking, tongue thrusting, pencil biting can heavily lead to unwanted, uncontrolled growth of the upper jaw along with flaring of the upper front teeth and resultant the fan shaped jaw growth.
D. Delayed eruption of the upper front teeth covers almost half of the white portion of the teeth with pink swollen gums. (pseudo- gummy smile)

Fortunately in today’s era of advanced technologies and treatment modalities, this problem of excessive gummy display can be “Regularized” in couple of appointments. The success rate of post-procedural result is amazingly satisfying and long lasting.

TREATMENT OPTIONS

For the concerned dentist, it is the diagnostic ability and assessment of the post-procedural looks that is of paramount importance.

A. Hereditary pattern of excessive growth of upper jaw along with gums can be treated surgically (invasive) or non-surgically (non-invasive).

If the growth of the jaw is far beyond normal parameters there is a need of surgical correction. Fortunately it is not very common, in remaining situations treatments is mostly non-surgical.

B. Gummy smile cases due to uneven balance between the two jaws, within permissible limits are mainly treated with orthodontic braces with amazing results. The time span will vary between 12 to 15 months depending on the severity of the case.

C. Particular childhood habits with resultant fan shaped teeth and jaw can be

treated on a similar line. It needs extra care from cosmetic dentist to close small gaps in the front tooth with minimal cosmetic and gum correction.

D. Delayed eruption of teeth with resultant “show off” of gums is called as passive eruption (pseudo smile). The condition can be treated with various clinical procedures as follows:-

1. The simplest and most frequent procedure is the reshaping of the excessive gums with “Soft Tissue Diode Lasers”. It is a walk in – walk out procedure (see photos below) and is permanent without the overgrowth of unwanted pink portion.



2. When the gummy portion is well supported with underlying “parent bone” it needs a small surgical correction, called as “Crown Lengthening Procedure – CLP”. (see photos below)



In certain cases, patient has typical complaint of excessive dark gums (literally black gums called CARBON gums). With the legitimate use of soft tissue lasers it can be treated very effectively. It’s a walk in-out appointment. (see photos below)



COSTING

A. A typical cosmetic contouring of “little excess gums” with soft tissue laser can cost around 20k per jaw (Anterior Zone of Excellence).

B. A typical CLP procedure with small surgical requirement for upper jaw can be in a range of 50 to 70k. The results are satisfactory and permanent.

C. “Carbon Gums” (melanin pigmentation) treated with soft tissue lasers can cost between 25 -30k. Caution: the pigmentation may reappear after 18-24 months and need to be retouched.

SUMMARY

In today’s world of “Showman-ship” or “Face value era” these once upon a time neglected issues are affecting the person on “Socio-Economic” front!

The issue of “First Look”, “Smiling Face”, “Unpleasant Profile”, “Impressive personality”, which may be getting hampered by this “Denture like look” or “Gummy Look” can be corrected to a very pleasing one. It is a big social commitment and service to the society that can be rendered in dental clinics.