

## INSTANT ORTHODONTICS

In a world of instant gratification, “instant orthodontics” is probably right up there with rippling abdominals. Who wouldn’t opt out of two-plus years of brackets and wires and elastics, sore teeth, and monthly adjustments?

Advances in cosmetic dentistry have made this a viable alternative for many patients. Most of the limitations and criticisms of the procedure have been overcome with new materials and techniques. I have seen many patients come in embarrassed to show their teeth and leave amazed, unable to stop grinning.

“Instant orthodontics” is not an appropriate term in the strict sense, because it usually does not involve moving the teeth. In the widely used sense we use shaping, porcelain veneering, and bonding techniques to visually straighten the teeth for a strictly cosmetic result. Some cases are very simple while others are very involved.

Who can do instant orthodontics? Most general dentists can offer comparable results. As I have written previously, there is no such thing as a “cosmetic dentist,” it is not an accredited specialty, and a frank dentist will not make that claim. Some will not bother with these cases and might refer you to a dentist who does.

Ask your dentist how many cases they have done and tell them exactly what you want to accomplish. If they take the time to review the process with you and discuss what they can do, you will probably have a very nice result. Most dentists want you to be very happy with their work and will probably want to take before and after pictures.

Generally, this is not appropriate treatment for children or anyone with severe bite or gum problems, but don’t be afraid to seek a second opinion.