

Stacy Eichner wanted a new smile. “I didn’t like the way my teeth looked,” remembers the 16 year old. “My family knew of Dr. Blank, so we scheduled an appointment with him.”

Stephen G. Blank, DDS, practices cosmetic and functional dentistry in Port St. Lucie.

“When Stacy first came to me her major concern was tooth discoloration,” recounts Dr. Blank. “Her teeth were beige with spots of chalky white, which may have been caused by developmental imperfections in their formation. She had gone through orthodontic treatment to have her teeth straightened. Her teeth were nicely aligned; however, there were problems with her bite, and her teeth were worn down significantly for her age.”

Stacy confided that she was not aware of the extensive tooth wear that had already taken place.

“When we first did her smile design visit, I measured her teeth and found that her central incisors, or two upper teeth, measured only 8 1/2 millimeters tall,” recalls Dr. Blank. “Because a typical central incisor is 10 1/2 to 11 1/2 millimeters tall, I knew that a significant amount of tooth had been worn away. Additionally, the outside enamel layer was missing on the biting edge. This is like an M&M where the candy coating is gone, exposing the softer chocolate center. This, together with a habit of grinding her teeth and her unstable bite, meant that Stacy’s teeth were self-destructive and were destined to wear down to an even greater extent.”

When people aren’t happy with their smiles they can become self-conscious and may not let themselves laugh or have as much fun as they otherwise would. Unattractive

teeth can deflate their self-esteem and can cause them to reserve their smiles.

“Young people particularly may refrain from big, inviting smiles because they don’t want to show their teeth,” observes Dr. Blank.

Mindful of his patient’s expectations, Dr. Blank chooses his cosmetic dentistry

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Stacy says she loves her new smile.



speaking with our patients about their desires and goals,” notes Dr. Blank. “The design includes the length of the teeth, the proportions we are looking for, the desired shape of

the teeth, and their color. In Stacy’s case, I knew that along with tooth coloration, I also needed to address the function of her teeth and to restore their length and biting surfaces.”

“Dr. Blank explained to me what could be done to improve my teeth,” says Stacy. “He told me that veneers would be my best option and described just what they were.”

Porcelain veneers

“The placement of porcelain veneers can be a beautiful and long-lasting option for creating naturally dazzling smiles,” describes Dr. Blank. “Veneers are thin, semitranslucent shells that are permanently bonded to the front of the teeth. For patients like Stacy whose enamel layer is missing on the biting edge, they can go up and over the tip of the tooth and onto the biting surface to replace the missing tooth structure. Not only do they help patients achieve a beautiful, confident smile, but they also contribute to improved dental health.”

Dr. Blank designed a plan for Stacy that included laser gum reshaping, bonded composite restorations for her molars, and porcelain veneers that wrapped around her biting surfaces on 10 of her upper and 10 of her lower teeth. Because he was adding structure back to Stacy’s teeth, Dr. Blank’s tooth preparation for

her was very conservative.

“The first element of Stacy’s treatment was reshaping her gums,” explains Dr. Blank. “After determining she had some healthy tooth hiding under the gum line, we used a state-of-the-art laser treatment to extend the appearance of her front teeth. That gave her teeth the pretty curve at the top that is often missing when teeth look somewhat square. It restores the curve and softens the smile with no discomfort to the patient. Stacy had no complaints, sensitivity, or bleeding from the laser treatment.”

Dr. Blank then took study models and photographs of Stacy that he sent to the laboratory for the wax-up.

A wax-up, or a wax model of how the enhanced or repaired teeth will look, is completed by the laboratory following Dr. Blank’s prescription. It simulates the size, shape, and color of the new teeth and is used to make any necessary changes before the lab proceeds to make the patient’s new restorations, which in Stacy’s case were all-porcelain veneers.

“I helped choose the color I wanted,” notes Stacy. “I wanted a bright smile, but I didn’t want it to look fake.”

“On our patient’s second visit, the teeth are prepared for the new restorations, and any old dentistry is removed,” says Dr. Blank. “Impressions are made for the laboratory, and temporaries that match the wax-up are placed.

“The temporaries give our patients the opportunity to see how their new restorations will look. At this stage changes can be made, such as adding a bit of length or a little curvature or a slight reduction. We give the laboratory instructions on coloring, translucency, and brightness.”

Following her second visit, Stacy left

Dr. Blank’s office with resin temporaries. “They looked beautiful,” says Stacy.

“They looked just like her new teeth were going to look,” adds Dr. Blank.

The final step for her veneers was to bond the porcelain restorations to Stacy’s teeth.

“We also treated Stacy’s molars with bonded composite restorations, rebuilding their structure so we did not have to do crown work,” adds Dr. Blank. “It was a more conservative approach.”

Stacy says she liked working with Dr. Blank.

“The whole process was pretty easy,” she observes, “and the results are really good.

“I love my teeth.” **FHCN**—Kris Kline

For that healthy smile ...

Dr. Blank and his staff look forward to meeting the readers of Florida Health Care News. For more information or to schedule an appointment, please call (772) 878-7348. His office is located at 184 NW Central Park Plaza in Port St. Lucie.

Your first visit

“Our mission is to educate our patients as to their present level of oral health and to help them achieve and maintain optimum oral health for their entire lives,” reflects Dr. Blank. “It is our goal to create a comfortable, trusting, and caring atmosphere for our patients and staff. We provide a level of dentistry that allows our patients to reach the goals we have set together.

“Because we believe our patients’ first visit is critical in meeting this goal, we schedule one and a half hours to spend with them. We believe it will be the most thorough first visit and oral examination they will ever have.”

Dr. Blank explains that the first visit includes the following:

- Tour of the office
- A review of sterilization systems
- Dental and medical history review with Dr. Blank
- Discussion of dental desires and goals
- Review of dentist-patient commitment
- Blood pressure screening
- Complete oral examination
- TMJ evaluation
- Occlusal (bite) evaluation
- Soft-tissue examination
- Cancer screening
- Dental charting
- Computerized periodontal measurements
- Intra-oral video imaging
- Study model impressions as needed
- Digital x-rays (filmless, lower radiation) as needed for diagnosis
- Hygiene fitness evaluation and score
- Oral hygiene instruction and practice

Dr. Blank invites you to visit his website at www.PSLDENTIST.com.

Stephen G. Blank, DDS



Stephen G. Blank, DDS, is a graduate of Northwestern University Dental School in Chicago. He has since completed intensive continuing education studies, and he and his dental team have completed the Dental Organization for Conscious Sedation program. Dr. Blank has taught continuing education courses for dentists, dental assistants, and hygienists in conjunction with Indian River Community College’s Dental Science department, and he is a facilitator/mentor with the Dental Boot Kamp program and a supporter of the Smiles for Life Foundation. Dr. Blank enjoys teaching dental teams around the country.

procedures and methods carefully. He takes his time in evaluating both the patient’s dental condition and how the new smile will fit with other facial features.

“During the smile design visit, I