

Dental Trends

CONVERSING DENTISTRY WITH TONY HASHEMIAN, DDS

WRITTEN BY **SUSAN KAVANAUGH**



Tony Hashemian, DDS

Dr. Tony Hashemian earned his doctorate of dental surgery from Creighton University School of Dentistry in Omaha, Nebraska. He has been practicing general and cosmetic dentistry in Arizona since 1997. He received his bachelor's degree in Human Physiology from the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. Hashemian has been a member of the American Dental Association since 1997. He has been president of Classic Dental for the past four years, which has private offices in Scottsdale, Phoenix, Mesa and Sun City. Hashemian has consistently been successful in achieving high quality of care to each of these offices.

In practice for the past seven years, Dr. Tony Hashemian, president of Classic Dental in Phoenix, has his finger on the pulse of new dental trends and services. He recently sat down with *AZHealth Magazine* to discuss the latest in dental techniques.

What types of dental services are people most frequently requesting?

People are more aware of their smile and want to make improvements. They come in because they want to lighten the shade of their teeth, improve the appearance of old fillings and correct any misalignments they may have. For whitening, a client can do a one-hour office procedure or they can lighten the shade of their teeth with custom-made trays to use at home. With the trays for home use, the client uses gel for one hour a day for about seven to 10 days.

If someone has crowded or misaligned teeth, what is available to correct this?

If someone has spacing problems or crowded teeth, they can receive immediate results with veneers or porcelain crowns — even bonding. If there's a lot of crowding, creating misalignment, there are two options. One is the traditional way: going through the orthodontist and having brackets and wires placed on the teeth. The other option is using Invisalign™, a new technology that has been out for about three years. It's very unique because you're still moving your teeth, but you don't have any brackets. You use retainers for a period of six months to a year to achieve that alignment. Invisalign™ is offered through dentists who have been certified to offer the technology and the orthodontist. To receive the certification, the dentist must go through a continuing education program set up by the Invisalign™ company. The price range for Invisalign™ is about the same as regular orthodontics, about \$4,000 to \$4,500.

Invisalign™ is most popular with patients who may have had regular braces when they were younger and need some more alignment now, but don't want to go through the same thing to correct the problem. Invisalign™ is convenient because of appearance, but also because you can

take off the retainer when you eat and brush and floss your teeth. Your hygiene is very good this way. Someone who would not be a good candidate for this new technology is a person who needs more expansion done or more invasive orthodontics.

How can people afford to have mini-makeovers, much less "extreme makeovers," on their smiles?

Insurance and also other companies that offer discount programs. If someone needs not just dental work, but also cosmetic work, for a reasonable investment you could get a lot of work done. For example, two cleanings and an exam can cost as little as \$120 a year and it doesn't have to be paid off at one time.

Is there anything, in addition to cost factor, that challenges the success of dentistry today?

I think the biggest challenge that we have today is a lack of consumer education. Basically, people have three major concerns. One, they have fear of going to the dentist. Two, they find it expensive. Three, they think it's a luxury. This means they think that if their teeth do not hurt then they don't need to go to the dentist. Yet, there are plans out there to meet the financial concerns. Most people are not getting the correct number of recommended cleanings. They should be having it done twice a year. Getting a cleaning is not just making sure the dentist scrubs your teeth, but also determining if you are doing a proper job of maintaining your teeth by brushing and by flossing.

Patients need to be educated not just about cosmetic dentistry, but also about oral health. Periodontal disease can lead to heart disease because the accumulation of bacteria in the mouth, where there is a very rich blood supply, can eventually affect the heart. The positive thing about cosmetic dentistry though is that because people are going in because they want to improve their smile they are learning more about oral hygiene by their very presence. That's a positive step that our culture has taken. AZH