

# No Preparation Porcelain Veneers: Fact or Fiction

By Dr. Charles Botbol BSC, DDS



One of the hottest topics in dentistry today is "Prep Less" or "Minimal Prep" Veneers. There are two main reasons for the interest in this concept: 1) A major manufacturer is marketing Prep fewer

veneers to the public creating widespread interest, and 2) it provides an opportunity to provide conservative aesthetics to those patients not desiring traditional tooth preparation, this increasing potential for performing more smile designs in our practices.

***It is important to understand that "Prep Less" or "Minimal Prep" veneers are a technique, not a specific material.***

In the past few years, a dental manufacturer has been marketing directly to the public the concept of placing veneers without prepping the teeth: "no drilling, no shots, no pain, and no removal of tooth structure". Their product is called "Lumineers™".

Lumineers are a brand of porcelain veneers made by Den-Mat Corporation. The claim is that they can be just pasted or bonded over the top of your teeth with no drilling, because they add very little bulk to the teeth. That makes them seem very easy to place. In theory, they simplify the placement of porcelain veneers. But other complexities of cosmetic dentistry are all still present and all just as complex, maybe even more so. Properly placing veneers requires the hand of an artist, to properly design them for the shape of your face and your personality. When there is no drilling on

the teeth beforehand, certain parts of the smile design process actually become more complicated, because the dentist is confined to working with the shapes of the teeth the way they are. Color control, which is actually the area where general dentists have the most trouble when they attempt to do cosmetic dentistry, becomes more difficult when the porcelain veneer is thinner. The Lumineers certification program involves taking a two-day course to learn how to place them. If the dentist pays the fee and attends, they become certified to place Lumineers and earn a spot on Den-Mat's referral list. I truly feel that two days isn't long enough to transform a general dentist into a "cosmetic dentist". Most dentists would agree. Besides, mere attendance at a course provides no assurance of the artistic ability of the dentist or how much the dentist has retained of what is learned.

When a no-drill technique is used, you will likely end up with a slight ridge where the veneer meets your tooth. This ridge could attract stains or make your tooth more susceptible to decay because it attracts plaque. Or, it could inflame the gums. Your teeth could also end up being lengthened or looking bulky or "toothy" with this technique. If that fits your bite and your appearance, then that's fine, but it is wise to consult with a dentist who will be honest with you in telling you the advantages and disadvantages and what you can expect.

In my opinion, Lumineers™ do not meet the requirements as far as compatibility and beauty that more modern porcelains feature. Unfortunately, they have been marketed in such a way that the public's perception

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is that only Lumineers™ can be used for the "prep less" technique. With this direct marketing to consumers, dentists have been confused as to what ceramics can be used for very thin, or even no preparation veneers. In my opinion, Lumineers™ offer many limitations that using a different material with an artistic ceramist can offer. One of these being direct communication with the fabricating ceramist. A second being able to utilize a ceramist that has attended numerous live patient and hands-on courses to truly understand how important of a role the ceramist plays in "designing the smile".

To meet the needs of those clinician's that want to place very thin veneers without compromising aesthetics, there is terrific new very thin veneer are called "Emprethins™". This pressed ceramic has had great success so far and may soon become the standard in the industry for the most beautiful thin veneers available.

#### So what next?

The prep less option can certainly yield esthetics that rival traditionally prepped veneers. And, some people in dentistry believe that you cannot achieve a satisfying esthetic outcome using prep fewer veneers. But I have found that if you have a thorough knowledge of prep fewer veneers-when and how to use them-and follow several prerequisites, you can achieve a very attractive result.

Cosmetic dentistry isn't as simple as just pasting some veneers over the top of some-

one's teeth and letting the lab do the rest. The lab cannot make up for what the dentist doesn't know in a situation like this. It is strongly advised, for a major procedure as life-altering as porcelain veneers can be, you seek the services of a dentist who has had significant training and a practice that focuses on cosmetic dentistry.

#### Before and After photos of actual cases



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## Q & A with Dr. Charles Botbol

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### **Q: Why are Prep less porcelain veneers so popular?**

**A:** One of the hottest topics in dentistry today is "Prep less" or "Minimal Prep" Veneers. There are two primary reasons for the interest in this concept: 1) A major manufacturer is marketing Prep fewer veneers to the public creating widespread interest, and 2) it provides an opportunity to provide conservative aesthetics to those patients not desiring traditional aggressive tooth preparation.

### **Q: Will prep less porcelain veneers look fake?**

**A:** The prep less option can certainly yield esthetics that rival traditionally prepped veneers. And, some people in dentistry believe that you cannot achieve a satisfying esthetic outcome using prep fewer veneers. But I have found that if you have a thorough knowledge of prep fewer veneers-when and how to use them-and follow several prerequisites, you can achieve a very attractive result. It is strongly advised you seek the

advice of a dentist who has had significant training and a practice that focuses on cosmetic dentistry.

### **Q: What if my dentist doesn't do Lumineers?**

**A:** It is important to understand that "Prep less" or "minimal Prep" veneers are a technique, not a specific material. In the past few years, a dental manufacturer has been marketing directly to the public the concept of placing veneers without prepping the teeth: "no drilling, no shots, no pain, and no removal of tooth structure" For patients who are candidates for prep less veneers, the process can usually be completed within two appointments, with beautiful results. With prep less veneers, smiles can be brightened, spaces closed, straightened and reshaped to yield the desired smile. If need be, they can later be removed with a laser with minimal or no damage to the patient's teeth since no preparation was done.

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ing you relaxed and better able to cope with anxieties that will naturally accompany the anticipation of surgery.

### **Right Price:** Is the price too-good-to-be-true?

The "right" price for your plastic surgery is not necessarily the lowest price. Naturally, no one would like to pay more for a product or service than they absolutely must. But shopping for plastic surgery services is very different from shopping for gasoline, in that the surgical treatments are not commodities that can be assumed identical regardless of their point of purchase.

With the above in mind, I strongly discourage any temptation to choose a sur-

geon, procedure or facility on the basis of price alone. Should you happen to find a surgeon who seems to offer a true bargain, do ask yourself the question, "Have any safety measures been overlooked in order to offer me this low price?"

This introduction to the Five P's of Plastic Surgery Safety should help you remember some basic factors influencing the safety of your surgical procedure and provide a framework for discussion during a consultation with the surgeon. For further safety information I suggest visiting the website of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, [www.plasticsurgery.org](http://www.plasticsurgery.org), just remember that all regulatory bodies in Canada will be different.

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