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CELEBRITIES LIKE KATIE COURIC, CHELSEA CLINTON, AND TORI SPELLING ALL HAVE ‘GUMMY SMILES’ BUT IT IS NO LONGER A STICKY SITUATION THANKS TO THE “GUM LIFT” PROCEDURE

New York, NY December 9, 2002 - When a person’s smile reveals an abundance of pink gum as well as an overly toothy grin, this has often been cruelly dubbed a ‘horse smile.’ “From an aesthetic standpoint, showing more tooth and fewer gums is desirable, especially on the upper teeth,” says **Dr. Robert Holt a West Palm Beach, Florida periodontist** with the Florida Institute for Periodontics and Dental Implants (FLIPDI) “The way to correct this is to lengthen the teeth and trim away the gums which is also known as a “**gum lift.**”

A *gummy smile* is caused by two different situations: In one event it may be the result of a person’s jaw relationship, or it may be through passive eruption which is when the adult teeth erupt into the mouth but the gums stop short of exposing the whole tooth. In the latter case, the person actually has more teeth than is shown, it’s just that the gum stopped moving too soon. “With those patients,” says Dr. Holt, “it is a very simple procedure that involves some gum trimming which could make a substantial difference, since there are often several millimeters of tooth that remains un-exposed.” Another treatment for the gummy smile is crown lengthening which involves bone reshaping in addition to gum trimming. “There needs to be a certain distance between the margin of the gum and the crest of the bone. If, in some situations, a dentist were just to trim the gum and invade the width, the body would simply re-grow the gum.”

Some people with a gummy smile are quite self-conscious and have restrained smiles that are not big and natural. “The proper treatment can make a dramatic difference,” says Dr. Fred Norkin. “Patients have told me that even before the final stages are completed they are talking and smiling more than before”. Models, newscasters, business people and anyone who wants to make a great first impression can benefit from the proper gum treatments. “Treating someone’s smile, especially removing a gummy smile, can really build up a person’s self-confidence and how they project themselves. They become infinitely more comfortable with their self-image.”

Dr. Norkin does not recommend gum trimming or crown lengthening to anyone before the age of sixteen. “As children grow, their jaw bones are also growing so a dentist would not want to perform the treatments on someone who is not dentally mature, because they are still going through some changes”. Most people have this procedure done when they are in their late teens 20’s or 30’s, however the average age may be rising. As more adults are undergoing cosmetic dental procedures such as braces, they are also visiting the periodontist and requesting the removal of their gummy smiles.

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