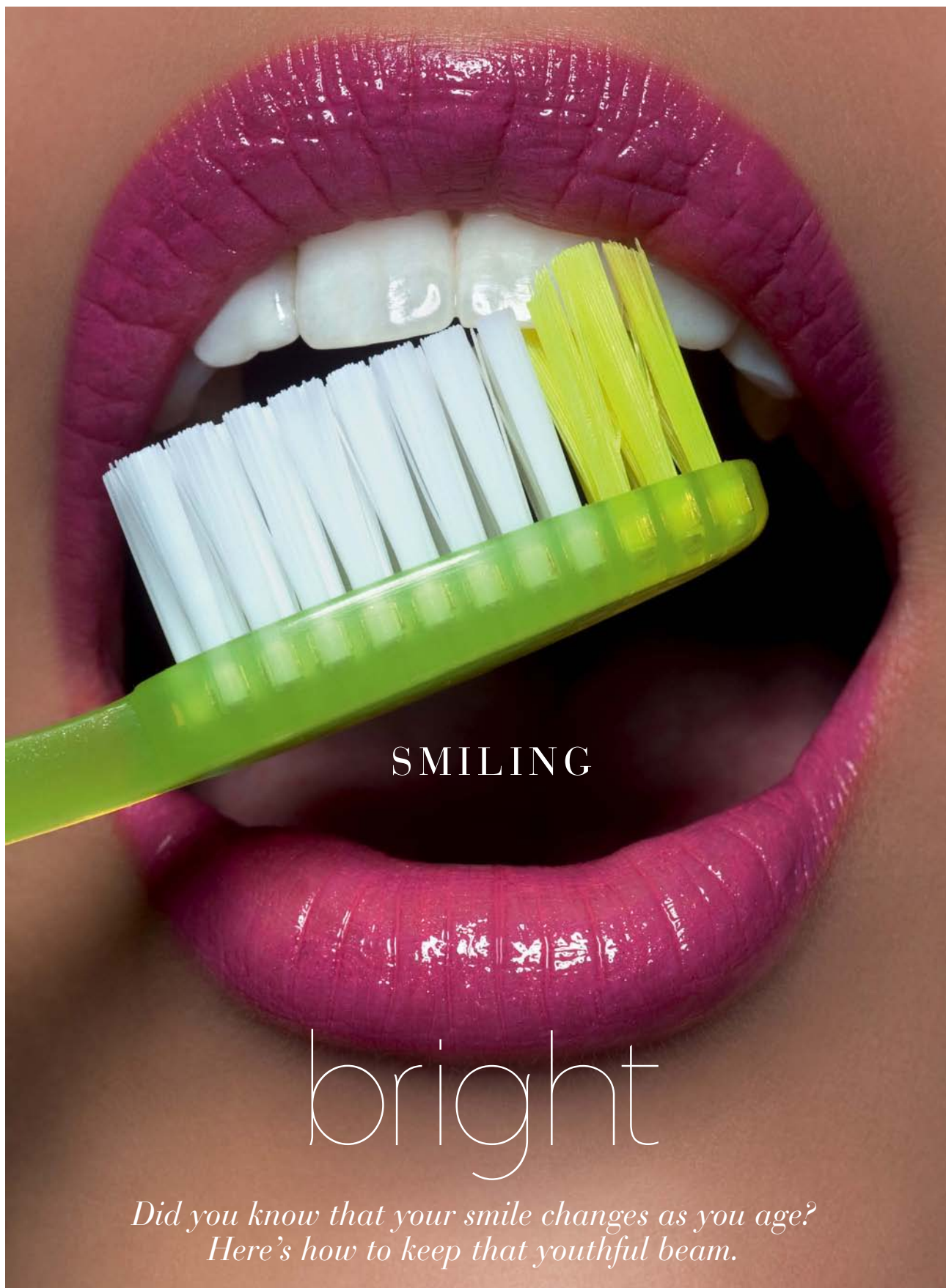


ANTI-AGING REPORT

BY KIM BELL



SMILING

bright

*Did you know that your smile changes as you age?
Here's how to keep that youthful beam.*

our mouth, and smile, is the first point of contact when you are interacting with people (apart from the eyes, of course). And this is where your various emotions are first visible – be it a toothy grin, a smirk, a look of horror, unhappiness or anger. No wonder upkeep and maintenance are so important.

According to Dr Hugo Lemmen, one of South Africa's leading practitioners in advanced cosmetic and reconstructive dentistry, and founder of Perfect Smile, your mouth is the dominant feature of your face by virtue of its size, and the central incisor the dominant tooth. He explains that there are two ways to analyse your smile: emotional evaluation and objective analysis.

THE EMOTIONAL SMILE EVALUATION:

The emotional smile evaluation is based on your own subjective perception of your smile, says Lemmen. He has designed a list of questions that reveal your inner feelings about how your smile affects your self-image, how it impacts on your interactions with others, and how it influences the quality of your relationships.

1. Do you love the appearance of your teeth and smile?
2. Do you ever turn your face when smiling or hold your hand up in front of your mouth when talking to others?
3. Do you look at models or other people with beautiful smiles and wish you had a similar smile?
4. Do you use your lips to cover any aspect of your smile?
5. Are you embarrassed to visit a cosmetic dentist due to the condition of your teeth, or the length of time since your last visit to a dentist?
6. How does your smile make you feel?
Do you feel confident or self-conscious?
7. Do you shy away from showing a full smile in front of others (and, in particular, strangers)?
8. When having a photograph taken, do you tend to smile with your lips closed?
9. Have you every held back a laugh, because you are uncomfortable about your smile?
10. How would a beautiful new smile make you feel?
11. What would you like to change about your smile?



THE OBJECTIVE SMILE ANALYSIS:

Stand in front of a mirror; now smile at yourself using your "normal" smile. Next, says Lemmen, look at the mirror and think of a funny moment in your life and give a big, laughing smile. "This big smile is probably a much larger smile than you feel comfortable using much of the time, if you are not happy with your teeth," says Lemmen. "When your smile is improved, however, your big smile appears much more spontaneously, because you look and feel great."

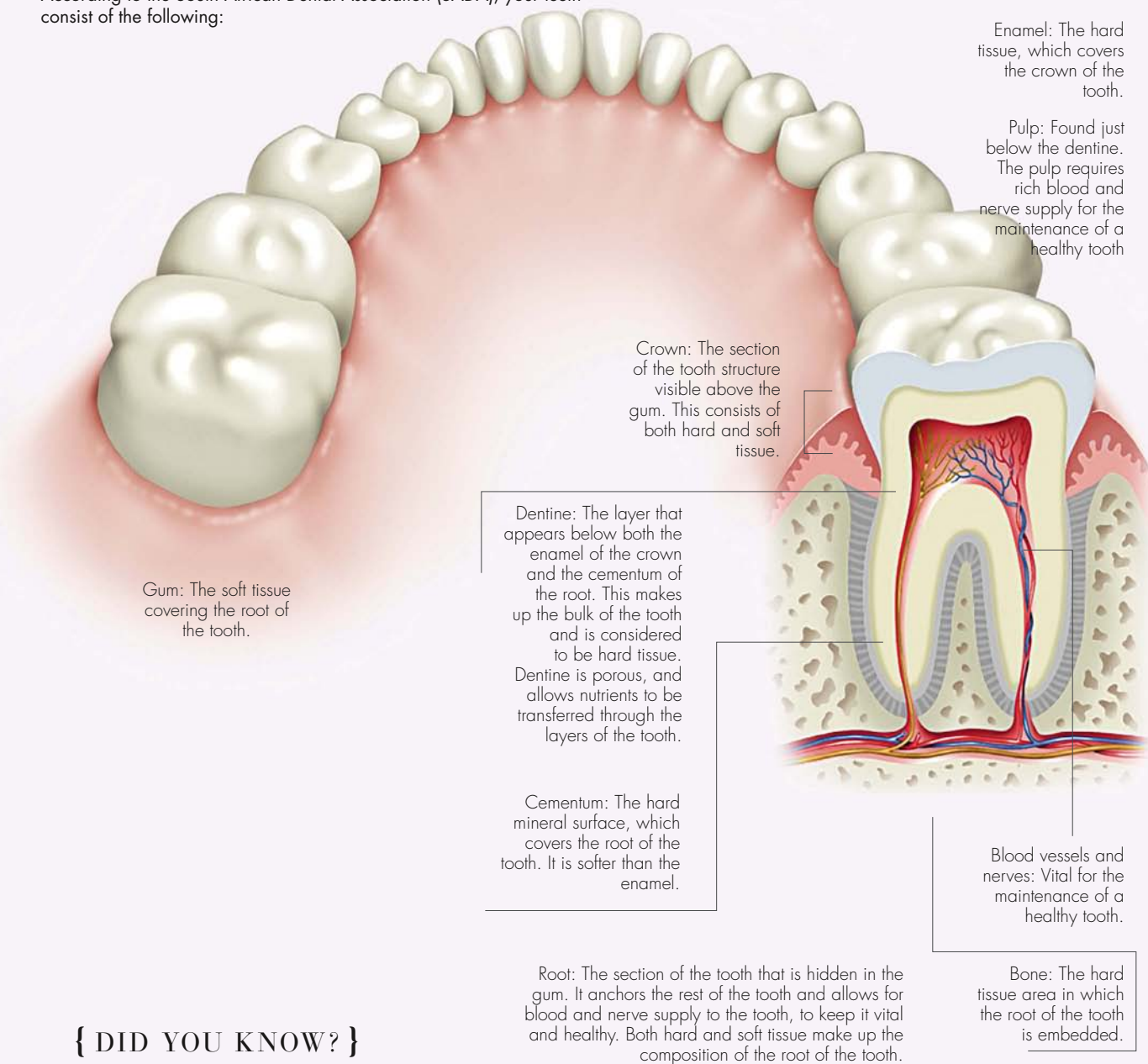
What bothers you about your teeth?

- Are all of your teeth brilliant-white, or dark or stained?
- Are there spaces between any of your teeth?
- Are you missing any teeth?
- Do you have teeth that are crooked, uneven or out of line?
- Do the biting edges of your upper teeth follow the curvature of your lower lip?
- Do any of your teeth appear short and fat, too small or too large?
- Are the edges of your teeth too long or too short, or are they all even?
- Do your teeth all slant one way or another?
- Is the midline of your two front teeth centred with your face and nose?
- Are the edges of your canine teeth too long, sharp, or do they look out of line?
- Do you grind your teeth, or are there any of the biting edges that are chipped or worn down?
- Do you have a gummy smile – showing too much gum tissue, or having gums that are too thick?
- Are your gums even, in line and symmetrical, or irregularly shaped?
- Have your gums receded, or do they appear red or puffy?
- Do you have grey, black or silver dental fillings in your teeth?
- Do you have any old crowns that have dark edges at the top or that don't look natural?

By answering these questions, you will have an idea of how you feel about your teeth and smile. Speak to your dentist or cosmetic dentist to find out what the best course of action is for you, for your self-esteem and for your health.

THE STRUCTURE OF YOUR TEETH

According to the South African Dental Association (SADA), your teeth consist of the following:



{ DID YOU KNOW? }

ONLY 25% OF PEOPLE FLOSS THEIR TEETH REGULARLY. STAINS TEND TO ADHERE TO BOTH PLAQUE AND TARTAR BUILDUP. THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT REGULAR FLOSSING HELPS TO REMOVE PLAQUE, WHICH IN TURN PREVENTS BUILDUP. BY REMOVING PLAQUE AND EXCESS FOOD PARTICLES (THAT YOUR TOOTHBRUSH MAY NOT BE ABLE TO REACH), YOUR TEETH APPEAR BRIGHTER.

Periodontium: The root of the tooth is held by periodontium ligaments, which originate from the surrounding bone and are embedded in the cementum.

WHITE AND BRIGHT

Stained and yellow teeth can make you appear older than you are. Red wine, coffee and cigarettes are considered the main culprits, but tooth enamel is also worn down as we age, allowing the yellow colour of the dentine to show through. There are ways and means to whiten surface stains and reveal a brighter smile.

Lemmen explains that whitening (or bleaching) treatments are available for every budget, time frame and temperament. "Teeth whitening removes the stains and debris, leaving the enamel cracks open and exposed. Some of the cracks are quickly re-mineralised by saliva, while others are filled up again with organic debris."

There are two types of tooth stains. The first is extrinsic or surface stains, which are due to exposure to dark-coloured beverages, foods, tobacco, and general wear and tear (these can be lightened with at-home whitening treatments). The second is intrinsic stains that form on the interior of teeth. This is the result of trauma, aging, exposure to minerals during teeth formation and/or the excessive intake of fluoride. While these were previously considered to be resistant to bleaching, Lemmen explains that cosmetic dentistry experts now believe that even deep-set stains can be removed with supervised take-home teeth whitening that is maintained over a matter of months, or even a year.

"There is a direct correlation between tooth colour and age. Over the years, teeth darken as a result of wear and tear and stain accumulation. Teenagers will likely experience immediate, dramatic results from whitening. In the 20s, as the teeth begin to show a yellow cast, teeth-whitening may require a little more effort. When you're in your 40s, the yellow gives way to brown, and more maintenance may be called for. By the 50s, the teeth have absorbed a host of stubborn stains which can prove difficult (but not impossible) to remove," adds Lemmen.

THERE ARE TWO FORMS OF PROFESSIONAL TEETH WHITENING OPTIONS AVAILABLE:

In-office: Lemmen explains that this option offers a significant colour change in a short period of time. It involves the carefully controlled use of a relatively high-concentration peroxide gel, applied to the teeth by the dentist or trained technician after the gums have been protected with a paint-on rubber dam. Generally, the peroxide remains on the teeth for several 15- to 20-minute intervals that add up to an hour (at most). Those with particularly stubborn staining may be advised to return for one or more additional bleaching sessions, or may be asked to continue with a home-use whitening system.

Professionally dispensed take-home whitening kits: "Many dentists are of the opinion that professionally dispensed take-home whitening kits can produce the best results over the long haul," says Lemmen. Take-home kits incorporate an easy-to-use, lower-concentration peroxide gel that remains on the teeth for six to eight hours daily (sometimes overnight) for 10 to 14 days. The lower the peroxide percentage, the longer it may safely remain on the teeth. The gel is applied to the teeth using custom-made bleaching trays that resemble mouth guards.

It is important to note that a professional, personally customised home kit system is not the same as the kits you buy over the counter. However, over-the-counter kits and whitening toothpastes can help to target the extrinsic stains, and should be used only now and again to keep these stains at bay and your teeth looking brighter.



Cold Sores? Sun Blisters? Fever Blisters?

Solution...

Fithealth L-Lysine Tablets and Lysine Lip Cream



- Contains L-Lysine amino acid and active ingredients that assist in preventing and relieving the painful effects of cold sores, sun blisters and fever blisters
- For best results, use the tablets and lip cream in conjunction with each other
- Lysine products are suitable for adults and children
- Lysine Lip Cream is also suitable for those who find it difficult to swallow tablets

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THE AESTHETIC SOLUTION

As we age, so our face loses volume. Dr Deon van der Westhuizen, plastic and reconstructive surgeon, and member of the Allergan Medical Aesthetics Academy (AMMA), explains that this loss of volume to the mid-face area makes us look older. (However, he adds, subtle changes to this area can make you appear more youthful.)

The mid-face area covers the region from the lower eyelids, at the cheek junction, to the upper lip. It also includes the cheeks and the nasolabial folds, the lines that extend from the nose to the outer corners of your mouth. Both of these features are key indicators of facial aging. The cheeks provide support by pulling the soft tissue away from the side wall of your nose, as well as lifting the tissue around the corner of your mouth, thereby preventing the formation of marionette lines.

Van der Westhuizen explains that as we age, there are slight changes in the bone structure, and soft tissue deterioration, which result in the bone outline showing through the soft tissue. In the mid-face area, these changes result in our cheeks descending inwards and downwards, thereby narrowing our face and revealing more prominent cheek arches. At the same time, sagging tissue lower down the face, around the jowl area, tends to broaden our face at the jawline.

As bone tissue diminishes around our nostrils, our nose begins to droop, which in turn lengthens the upper lip until it drops over our upper teeth. The jaw moves slightly upwards, which further emphasises these aging changes.

"Restoration of the mid-face area is critical to restore a healthy, wide mid-facial shape, and lift tissue away from the mouth and upper lip," he adds.

So what are your options? A surgical facelift is one, but if you are looking for a non-surgical alternative, there are facial fillers. These are gel-like substances that are injected under the skin or the deeper layers of the face to restore lost volume. "Using fillers, we can physically put volume back into the face, to re-inflate it. This provides the skin and muscle with more support, thereby restoring facial shape,"

adds Van der Westhuizen.

Dr Maureen Allem, an aesthetic specialist and founder of the Skin & Body Renewal clinics, adds that our mouths are equally problematic. "As we age, our lips lose volume, making them look thinner, with less projection." She adds that the upper lip develops vertical bleed lines and the border around the lips tends to become less pronounced. (This is why lip glosses tend to bleed into your mouth area as you get older.)

Allem says the best aesthetic solution to this concern is lip rejuvenation. "Lip enhancement has gained much popularity since the '90s. Patients young and old desire fuller, more sensual lips, which, throughout time, have been associated with female sexuality." Allem recommends treatments such as Pearl Fractional, Dermaroller and injected mesotherapy, in combination with dermal fillers, to achieve that natural, and more youthful-looking, effect.

However, cautions Van der Westhuizen, don't think that fillers are a miracle treatment. "It's crucial that doctors work with their patients and evaluate their problem areas on an individual basis, because we all have very different facial structure and different DNA which dictates how we age, and we are also exposed to different levels of environmental damage. This means that anti-aging treatment should be customised to our individual needs, sometimes requiring incremental blending of different treatment tools."

He adds: "Wrinkles and lines are also considered to be an evolutionary indication of maturity and wisdom, and we should be careful not to eradicate them from our faces entirely. We have

the choice to allow signs of aging to remain as soft focal points that add to facial character, but when they become so pronounced that they become primary focal points on a person's face, they draw focus away from the person's better features. The trick is to soften the visible signs of aging, to allow our best features to appear naturally and authentically." ■

VENEERS

These are a thin covering made of porcelain, ceramic or composite, which is placed over the front, visible part of your tooth to enhance its appearance, says Lemmen. "Veneers are used on teeth when minor changes in the size and shape of teeth are needed. Veneers can be placed on front teeth that are poorly shaped, slightly crooked, chipped or worn. Veneers may also be used to lighten teeth that cannot be whitened by bleaching or to close gaps between front teeth."

He adds that because they are very thin and bonded directly onto the enamel, the underlying tooth structure should be sound and healthy.