

Face-Lift? Anti-Aging Dentistry Takes Years Off without Plastic Surgery



WEST HILLS SMILES' VISIONARY SOLUTIONS FOR AN AGING FACE

*Walking through the doors of West Hills Smiles and then past a well-stocked beverage station and vibrant aquarium awaits the reception area of dentists Ben Reyhani and Pasha Hakimzadeh. It's immediately obvious why the duo is taking the region by storm; their emphasis on luxury dentistry is filling a niche market for clients who want to spring for the most comfortable service. This concierge dentistry—think *Car and Driver* magazine and drinks of your choice, music playlists and movies in every room—has garnered serious word of mouth throughout the San Fernando Valley.*

Nonetheless, it's the team's anti-aging dentistry ideologies that are making these doctors a new force to be reckoned with in the area. We sat down with Dr. Pasha, who prefers the informal moniker, to learn more about his thoughts regarding the role of dental structure in aging and his office's innovative methodologies.

In a general sense, how are aging and dentistry related?

Pasha Hakimzadeh: Many of our patients are saddened to see that their smiles disappear over time. Their teeth are more hidden when they smile, or even when their mouths are open in general. Long, apparent teeth are associated with youth and vibrancy, so their lack of visibility ages the patient.

Why do our smiles disappear as we age?

PH: Our jaw position may shift and our teeth may shorten due to years of use and grinding. These changes affect the bite and the resting position of our face, making us look older. Similarly, the front teeth are shorter and skin around the mouth may have less tautness and hang down over the smile. Even a few millimeters here can make a drastic difference in the appearance of the smile.

How do you identify these changes?

PH: We look at the face as a whole to determine what the best course of action is. Symmetry and harmony can't be under-valued here. The results have to be as well-executed (through skill) as though they are natural-looking (through an aesthetically-trained eye). And what is natural-looking for one patient might not be the same for the next person. It really takes a personalized examination to achieve the best results.

Does this mean a long and invasive process for your patients?

PH: Quite the opposite. Comfort is our goal here. We're very thorough, but we are delicate. We're going to take as much time as the patient is willing to give in order to provide the best assessment and course of action possible. They deserve it. This also gives us the time to explore what kind of results our patients want. Are they the type who really

miss their beautiful, unique smile from their youth? Or are they ready to try something new, perhaps something a little sexier and sophisticated? It all comes out. Sometimes they'll bring a picture of what they want and we'll discuss expectations and our capabilities.

Your patients don't mind taking this time?

PH: Well, for one, we make the whole experience relaxing. And to make sure we get it right in each smile that we design, we start by digging deeply into our clients' lives. Dentistry, at its core, is a service, and you have to really listen to your clients. But, secondly, this isn't just a quick cleaning; this is an evaluation for anti-aging treatment. These are long-term changes that are worth their due diligence. What we're trying to fight here is the patient experience where they are essentially treated as another crown or filling. In these places, you'll notice back-to-back appointments with no room for anything other than identical cookie cutter treatment. These doctors are in cattle-call mode; they'll try the same methodology for practically every patient. Ironically, nobody in these types of offices are smiling.

Is that a common problem?

Sadly, yes. Because our society associates youth with long, white teeth, many dentists—often hastily—simply think anti-aging can be accomplished through slapping the same long, white veneers onto the front teeth of the patient. This doesn't solve the underlying issues. Nice one-size-fits-all front teeth won't change the loss of collagen and muscle tone that come with aging, for example.

That's for the plastic surgeons to handle, then?

PH: Not necessarily. Simply moving the skin around won't solve everything. It will sometimes even create an unnatural

smile. We present an effective approach that's much less invasive. For instance, our anti-aging techniques will smooth out folds and wrinkles around the mouth and lips, acting like a dermal filler would from the inside out. We don't have any qualms with plastic surgery or dermal fillers; in fact, they can often enhance our work at West Hills Smiles. What we do want our patients to know, however, is that our methods can create the same effects of a cosmetic procedure.

What, specifically, do your methods entail?

PH: Again, every approach will be different, keeping the unique facial structures of our patients in mind. But there are techniques that we turn to for the most common side-effects of aging. Expanding the teeth adds fullness to the smile, filling in the dark corners between teeth and at the edges of the smile. Deliberately building up the tips and side of the teeth can add necessary support to the lips and sides of the mouth, evening out the skin there. Gum reshaping may be necessary in some cases, as well, through our less-invasive laser treatments. Of course we'll also whiten teeth and replace metal fillings (which date the patients smile) with biocompatible tooth-colored materials.

Anything else you'd like to add, Dr. Pasha?

PH: We love what we do here at West Hills Smiles. We like the fact that we can help people appear younger and happier while also making them healthier. For anybody considering coming into our office, we want you to know that your beautiful smile may just be hidden and we have the vision and capabilities to help bring it out.

