Simplifying the complexity of composites.

Clinically, dentists face many choices when selecting composite resin material. But what is the most important criteria when picking a composite both clinically and professionally? Can it be simpler? Read more.

Real dentists challenge their composites.

Real dentists have been using the same composites for years, but can they still cut in a hand-handling way? Watch Video

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CaulkTalk: Ask Dr. Janyavula

Q: What are some helpful tips for selecting an appropriate composite shade?

Q: What causes a composite to stain?

Q: After using my fluted finishing burs and stones, do I really need to finish more?

See Answers

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Composite Resin Features that Matter:

By: Jason H. Guckin, DMD

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Ask Dr. Janyavula

Dr. Janyavula takes on a few questions on composites.

Q. What are some helpful tips for selecting an appropriate composite shade?

A. Shade selection is challenging and can be affected by many factors. Below are a few helpful tips to keep in mind when selecting the appropriate composite shade:

- Always take the shade before placing the rubber dam.
- Never look directly at the tooth for more than 3 seconds. Should you look longer, always rest your eyes before determining the final shade. For example, look at a grey wall or other neutral surface for a few seconds.
- When restoring anterior teeth, extend the bevel beyond the preparation to create ideal esthetics.
- If still uncertain which shade to select, place a small increment of composite on the surrounding tooth to get the best match. Some composites have a chameleon blending effect with surrounding tooth structure that can minimize human errors in shade selection to aid in producing ideal esthetics.

Q. What causes a composite to stain?

A. Staining of composite restorations can be caused by a number of patient, material and even dentist related factors. A patient’s dietary habits can affect the shade of the material. Regular exposure of the restoration to substances such as red wine and coffee can lead to increased staining of the composite over time, for example.

According to recent studies, the nature of agglomeration and distribution of composite filler is believed to trap stains intrinsically, meaning they cannot be polished out of the material. If occurring at the margins of the restoration, this staining may be interpreted as secondary caries. Not only is this undesirable from a patient perspective in terms of esthetics, but it may also lead to premature restoration replacement. It is advised to use composites with greater stain resistance and to properly finish and polish the restoration to further protect it against staining.

Q. After using my fluted finishing burs and stones, do I really need to finish more?

A. Fluted burs are designed to remove gross surface defects and to aid in the creation of proper anatomical form. Using them as the sole finishing/polishing instrument is likely to leave surface irregularities, which can contribute to plaque traps and excessive staining. Numerous studies have emphasized the importance of sequential use of additional finishing and polishing systems after gross contouring to effectively remove the fine surface irregularities and impart a high gloss.