

Closing a Gap in Your Smile: The Options a Dentist Will Consider

By JoD Lifestyle · 6 min read

A gap between the front teeth is one of those features people feel two completely different ways about. Some wear it happily as a signature; plenty of well-known faces have one. Others have spent years covering their smile in photos and quietly wishing the space would close. If you are in the second camp, the good news is that a gap, which dentists call a diastema, usually has more than one route to closing it. The trick is matching the route to your particular gap.

There is no universal fix here. What suits a small space between two otherwise perfect teeth is different from what suits a gap tied to the position of several teeth. A dentist weighs the cause, the size, and your goals before suggesting a direction. Here is a tour of the main options and the thinking behind each.

First, why is the gap there?

Before talking treatment, a dentist wants to understand the cause, because it shapes everything that follows. A space can come from teeth that are simply smaller than the jaw they sit in, from the natural spacing of teeth, from an oversized band of tissue between the front teeth, or from the overall alignment of the bite. Occasionally a gap is a sign of something worth addressing in its own right, which is another reason an assessment comes first. Close the space without understanding why it is there, and it may drift back.

The main options

Broadly, the choices fall into a few families. Each has situations it suits well and situations it does not.

Moving the teeth together

If the gap reflects where the teeth sit, actually moving them is often the most conservative approach, because it closes the space using your own teeth rather than adding material. Clear aligners or braces gradually shift teeth into a new position. This route tends to appeal when there is more going on than a single gap, such as general spacing or a bite that could be improved at the

same time. It takes longer than a same-day cosmetic fix, but it addresses the position rather than masking it.

Adding material to the teeth

For a smaller space between otherwise healthy teeth, a dentist may build up the adjacent teeth so they meet. One well-established way to do this is [dental bonding](#), where a tooth-coloured material is shaped onto the teeth to close the gap. It is often completed in a single visit and does not usually require much, if any, removal of tooth structure. Whether it is suitable depends on the size of the gap and the condition of the teeth on either side.

Covering the teeth

Thin custom shells bonded to the front of the teeth are another way to reshape and close a space, particularly when a patient also wants to change the colour or form of several teeth at once. This is a more involved route than bonding and is considered when the goals go beyond the gap alone.

Each of these sits within the broader field of [cosmetic dentistry options](#), and a dentist can explain how they compare for your situation. The right choice is rarely obvious from the outside, which is why the conversation matters as much as the menu.

Weighing the choices

Approach	Often suits	Worth knowing
Aligners or braces	Gaps linked to tooth position, or wider spacing and bite concerns	Moves your own teeth; takes longer than a cosmetic add-on
Bonding	Smaller gaps between healthy teeth	Often a single visit; suitability depends on gap size and teeth
Thin custom shells	When reshaping or recolouring several teeth is also a goal	More involved; a bigger commitment than bonding

Think of this as a starting map, not a decision. A dentist may combine approaches, and what reads as the obvious pick on paper can shift once your teeth and bite are actually examined.

Questions worth bringing to the conversation

When you sit down to discuss a gap, a few questions tend to lead to a clearer plan:

- What is likely causing my gap, and does the cause affect which option will last?
- Which approaches are realistic for a space this size?

- Will the result need maintenance, such as a retainer, to keep the gap from returning?
- What are the trade-offs between a quicker cosmetic fix and moving the teeth?

There is no single best answer to closing a gap, only the option that fits your teeth, your goals, and what an examination reveals. A cosmetic change to your smile is still a dental decision, so it deserves the same careful assessment as any other treatment. Take the time to understand the choices, and the one that suits you tends to become clear.

Frequently asked questions

What are the options to close a gap in teeth?

The main families are moving the teeth together with aligners or braces, adding tooth-coloured material such as bonding, or covering the teeth with thin custom shells. Which is appropriate depends on what is causing the gap, its size, and the condition of the surrounding teeth. A dentist can recommend a direction after an examination.

Will a closed gap stay closed?

It can, but it depends on the method and the cause. Where teeth have been moved, a retainer is often needed to hold them in place, since teeth can drift over time. Where material has been added, the result depends on ongoing care and the material itself. Your dentist can explain what upkeep your chosen approach involves.

Is closing a gap purely cosmetic?

Often the motivation is cosmetic, but not always. A gap can relate to tooth position, the bite, or the surrounding tissue, and sometimes addressing it has a functional element too. That is why a dentist assesses the cause rather than treating every gap the same way. Individual cases differ, and an in-person evaluation guides the plan.

Sources & further reading

- [Canadian Dental Association — Your Oral Health](#) — general patient guidance across dental topics.
- [Ontario Dental Association — Your Oral Health](#) — Ontario-specific information for dental patients.
- [Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario — Information for Patients](#) — what patients can expect from dental care in Ontario.

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