

Aesthetic Gum Lift & Crown Lengthening

Canonical:

<https://directory.collinsstreetspecialistcentre.com.au/procedures/periodontics/aesthetic-gum-lift-crown-lengthening/>

Description:

The gumline is the frame of your smile. Even teeth that are well-shaped and correctly coloured can appear short, uneven, or disproportionate if the gum margin sits too low, too high, or unevenly across the front teeth...

Details:

Collins Street Specialist Centre – Aesthetic Gum Lift & Crown Lengthening

The gumline frames your smile. Teeth that are well-shaped and correctly coloured can still look short, uneven, or out of proportion when the gum margin sits too low, too high, or unevenly across the front teeth. A gum lift — clinically called crown lengthening — raises and reshapes the gumline to reveal more of the natural tooth structure, producing a more balanced result.

Collins Street Specialist Centre is Melbourne's dedicated referral centre for specialist periodontal care. Aesthetic gum lifting and crown lengthening are performed by our specialist periodontists using advanced laser technology. For patients whose treatment involves both periodontal contouring and porcelain restorations — veneers, crowns, or a full smile rehabilitation — our periodontists work closely with the CSSC prosthodontics team, so the ideal outcome is planned carefully before any procedure begins.

What is a gum lift / crown lengthening?

Crown lengthening is a surgical procedure that repositions the gum margin — and, where clinically indicated, the underlying bone — to expose more of the tooth's anatomical crown. It serves two distinct purposes: aesthetic correction of a gummy smile or uneven gumline, and functional clinical preparation, such as establishing adequate tooth structure for a reliable crown.

****Aesthetic gum lift:**** Typically performed across the front six to eight upper teeth (and sometimes the lower anteriors), an aesthetic gum lift reshapes and raises the gum margin to address excess gum display, improve gumline symmetry, or create more harmonious tooth proportions. Many patients choose this procedure alongside porcelain veneers or composite bonding as part of a comprehensive smile redesign. The gum contour provides the architectural foundation; the restorations complete the final result.

****Functional crown lengthening:**** When a tooth has broken down below the gumline — through decay, fracture, or failure of a previous restoration — there may not be enough tooth structure above the gum for a crown to seat and grip reliably. Crown lengthening exposes the required structure, re-establishing the biological width and retention the crown needs. This is both a periodontal and restorative procedure, planned in close coordination with the treating prosthodontist.

****Correcting a gummy smile (excessive gingival display):**** Some patients display a large amount of gum tissue when smiling. This may arise from altered passive eruption (where the gum has not receded to its natural position as the teeth emerged), short clinical crowns, a vertical maxillary excess of bony origin, or a hyperactive upper lip. A periodontist assesses the underlying cause and determines whether gum lifting alone will achieve a stable, predictable result, or whether orthodontic or surgical input is also needed.

When might you need a gum lift?

A gum lift or crown lengthening may be the right next step if you:

- Display an excessive amount of gum when smiling and feel this affects the overall appearance of your smile
- Have an uneven or asymmetrical gumline across the upper or lower front teeth
- Have teeth that appear short or squat because the gum margin sits lower than ideal
- Have been advised by a prosthodontist that crown lengthening is required before a crown can be reliably placed
- Are planning a smile makeover with veneers or crowns and want to optimise the gum architecture first
- Have a single tooth that appears shorter than its neighbours because of altered passive eruption

A thorough clinical evaluation is essential before any aesthetic gum procedure is planned. Your periodontist will examine the biological width — the distance from the base of the gum crevice to the bone crest — along with the bone levels and the relationship between the gum margin and the cemento-enamel junction of each tooth. This assessment determines whether the procedure is limited to soft tissue recontouring alone, or whether bone reshaping is also necessary for a stable, long-term result.

What to expect: the gum lift process

Pre-treatment planning

For aesthetic cases, treatment planning typically involves the periodontist and prosthodontist working together. A diagnostic wax-up may be fabricated — a physical model of the proposed final tooth shape that, together with gumline photographs and digital smile design planning, allows the ideal gum position to be mapped out before treatment begins. This approach of working backwards from the final smile ensures the gum lift is designed around the intended restorative outcome, not the other way around.

For functional crown lengthening, your periodontist coordinates directly with your prosthodontist to confirm the minimum tooth structure required for the crown preparation and to plan the procedure accordingly.

Laser gum lifting (soft tissue procedure)

When bone recontouring is not required — as is often the case for mild-to-moderate altered passive eruption or asymmetry correction — the procedure can be performed using laser technology alone. At Collins Street Specialist Centre, the Fotona LightWalker, NV Laser, and VersaWave allow precise, minimally invasive reshaping of the gum margin with excellent haemostasis (bleeding control), sterilisation of the tissue margin, and faster healing than conventional scalpel techniques.

Dr James van den Berg has been performing laser periodontal procedures since 2004 and is one of the most experienced laser periodontists in Victoria. For straightforward aesthetic gum lifts involving the front six teeth, laser treatment under local anaesthesia is well-tolerated and requires minimal downtime.

A laser gum lift typically takes 30–60 minutes and, where only soft tissue recontouring is required, can often be completed in a single appointment.

Surgical crown lengthening (with bone recontouring)

When biological width needs to be re-established, or when the bone crest must be repositioned for a stable and healthy long-term result, surgical crown lengthening is required. This procedure involves:

1. Local anaesthesia (with IV sedation available for patients who prefer it)
2. A sulcular incision to reflect the gum tissue away from the underlying bone
3. Reshaping of the alveolar bone crest using hand instruments and ultrasonic tips to achieve the required crown-to-bone distance
4. Repositioning and suturing of the gum margin at the new, more apical level
5. Laser assistance for final margin refinement where indicated

Surgical crown lengthening for the anterior sextant takes approximately 60–90 minutes. Recovery is more involved than a laser-only procedure, and a healing period of 6–12 weeks is typically required before definitive restorations are placed — the gum margin must fully stabilise before accurate impressions can be taken by the prosthodontist.

Timing of restorations

Patients frequently ask whether they receive their veneers or crowns before or after the gum lift. The answer is almost always **after**. Placing restorations before the gum has healed and stabilised risks incorrect margin positioning and compromised long-term outcomes. The gum lift comes first; prosthodontic restoration follows once healing is confirmed.

Recovery and aftercare

Recovery after a laser gum lift is generally straightforward: some tenderness at the treated sites for 1–3 days, minor swelling that resolves within a few days, and over-the-counter analgesia (ibuprofen or paracetamol) is usually all that's needed.

Recovery after surgical crown lengthening is more involved. Expect swelling and some discomfort for 3–7 days, prescription analgesia for the first 48 hours, and a soft diet for 1–2 weeks. Chlorhexidine mouth rinse is used for 2–4 weeks, and sutures are removed at the 1–2 week mark. Where crowns or veneers are planned, provisional restorations can often be placed shortly after surgery, with definitive restorations placed at 6–12 weeks.

Your periodontist will provide detailed written aftercare instructions specific to your procedure and circumstances.

Why see a specialist periodontist for a gum lift?

Aesthetic gum contouring is now more widely offered across the dental profession, but the clinical skill gap between a specialist periodontist and a general practitioner is considerable — particularly when the procedure involves bone recontouring, or when it must integrate with a complex restorative treatment plan.

The key advantages of specialist periodontal care at Collins Street Specialist Centre come down to a few things.

Biological width expertise matters more than most patients realise. Placing restorations too close to the bone crest — which happens when crown lengthening is inadequate — leads to chronic inflammation, gum recession, and restoration failure. Specialist periodontists are trained to manage this relationship precisely.

Laser precision is another differentiator. Not every practice offering laser gum lifts has the technology or clinical training to deliver consistent, predictable outcomes. Our team's dedicated laser systems and long-standing experience produce reliably better soft tissue results.

Restorative integration is where the CSSC model is genuinely different. Specialist periodontists here understand the prosthetic requirements for crowns and veneers in depth, and the periodontic and prosthodontic teams share the same building, collaborating on case planning as a matter of routine.

All Collins Street Specialist Centre periodontists are Dental Board-registered specialists. AHPRA registration can be verified at the [AHPRA website](https://www.ahpra.gov.au).

Our specialists

Aesthetic gum lifting and crown lengthening at Collins Street Specialist Centre is performed by our periodontics team on Level 12 & Tower, Manchester Unity Building:

****Dr Simon Hinckfuss**** is both a Specialist Periodontist and Specialist Prosthodontist — the only clinician in Australia with dual registration in both specialties. This positions him to plan and, where appropriate, manage both the periodontal and prosthetic phases of aesthetic smile treatment within a single specialist framework.

****Dr James van den Berg**** is a Specialist Periodontist and Victoria's most experienced laser periodontist, with laser-assisted gum lifting and crown lengthening experience dating to 2004.

****Dr Nupur Kataria**** is a Specialist Periodontist trained across the full range of aesthetic and functional crown lengthening procedures.

****Dr Ahmed El Hadidi**** is a Specialist Periodontist performing aesthetic crown lengthening and recession procedures, with particular attention to evidence-based aesthetic planning.

****Dr Peishan Jiang**** is a Specialist Periodontist experienced in crown lengthening as an integral part of comprehensive periodontal and implant treatment planning.

Related treatments

- ****[Gum Grafting](/procedures/periodontics/gum-grafting-soft-tissue-grafting-recession-treatment/)**** — When gum tissue needs to be added rather than lifted, gum grafting addresses recession and inadequate tissue volume. - ****[Gum Disease Treatment](/procedures/periodontics/gum-disease-treatment-gingivitis-periodontitis/)**** — Active periodontal disease must be fully treated and stabilised before any aesthetic gum procedure can be undertaken. - ****[Porcelain Veneers (Prosthodontics)](/procedures/prosthodontics/porcelain-veneers/)**** — Frequently planned in combination with a gum lift as part of a comprehensive smile redesign. - ****[Dental Crowns (Prosthodontics)](/procedures/prosthodontics/dental-crowns/)**** — Functional crown lengthening establishes the tooth structure required for reliable and lasting crown retention. - ****[Full Mouth Rehabilitation (Prosthodontics)](/procedures/prosthodontics/full-mouth-rehabilitation/)**** — Major restorative cases commonly include aesthetic gum contouring as an essential preparatory step.
