

Dr. Judy Sturm & Associates
Cosmetic & General Dentistry

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Dear Patients,

At the start of the August Summer Olympics in Beijing, the National Post ran a front page article under the headline "Crooked Smiles Disqualified." It described how the cute little Chinese girl we all thought we saw singing "Ode to the Motherland" in the opening ceremony was simply lip-synching it. She was a substitute presented to the world by the Chinese authorities instead of the real singing little girl who had "crooked teeth" and "in the interest of the nation" was therefore hidden somewhere in the background. There had been serious concern that her awkward smile would convey a poor and unattractive image of China.

This caused me to recall a perceptive New Yorker article written several years ago by Malcolm Gladwell (author of the two recent best sellers "Blink" and "The Tipping Point".) He quoted two Harvard researchers who did an extensive study on uninsured Americans and found that the most common complaint they heard was about teeth. As part of their findings they suggest the following: "People have bad teeth because going to the dentist for a check up seems to be a luxury. It isn't of course. As those struggling to get ahead in the job market quickly find, the unsightliness of bad teeth and the self consciousness that results can become a major barrier. Bad teeth have come to be seen as a marker of poor parenting, low educational achievement and slow or faulty intellectual development. *They are viewed as an outward marker of caste* (emphasis supplied.)"

It is this last sentence that came so strongly to mind, and I considered how whether one lives in a prosperous Western economy or a relatively poor developing society, *teeth as well as the quality of our smiles are markers*. We are all well advised to do all that is possible to keep them healthy and looking good. You never know when someone is gonna ask you to sing at an opening ceremony.

Fortunately, in recent years cosmetic dentistry has become a more democratic route for many since it is no longer only within reach of the rich and famous. On the contrary, taking steps to improve your appearance now is an investment in your long term health and well being which can be both pain-free and affordable.

Please remember that the end of the year is fast approaching and many of you have dental insurance coverage with benefits expiring on December 31st. If you have restorative or hygiene work that needs to be completed, or would like to treat yourself to a dazzling smile for end of year celebrations, book an appointment as soon as possible. In this way you can be assured of getting the work timely done while making maximum use of your plan benefits.

Thank you, as always, for your kind referrals of friends and loved ones.

77 Bloor Street West, Suite 1202 Toronto, ON. M5S 2M1 Tel. No.
416 967-4212