



# THE RISE OF THE DENT-FLUENCER

Say hello to the new breed of dental influencers on a mission to deliver perfect smiles

BY BECCI VALLIS

## BEAUTY

**F**irst came influencers, then skinfluencers, and now it's dentfluencers - dentists and hygienists who are using social media to share their expertise on everything teeth-related. With research showing that four in five people in the UK are considering dental treatments and nearly half of Brits are dissatisfied with their teeth\*, it's no surprise that Instagram has become a research outlet for those wanting next-level gnashers.

Celebrity dentist Dr Rhona Eskander, who has 109k Instagram followers (@Drrhonaeskander), says: "Cosmetic dentistry has boomed since Covid, particularly because of Zoom. People are obsessed with how their teeth look, not only in static pictures, but also in motion when they're speaking. The impact of the smile is more valued than ever."

Rather than nipping to their usual local dentist, many are using social media to find a cosmetic dentist they trust. "We live in a world where we choose what clinician we see, what restaurant we go to or even where to travel based on social media recommendations," says Dr Victoria Sampson, a dentist with 11.7k Instagram followers (@Drvictoriasampson). "The days of going to a dentist because they are down the road are disappearing."

### STOPPING THE SCARE FACTOR

As well as a demand for "teethments", getting to know the dentist behind the drill has played a part in removing the fear factor. "The dental chair can be a scary place and to be able to see that we are normal can reassure some patients," says Dr Sampson. "I also wanted patients to realise we aren't all the same - I like to play deep house and techno in my treatment room."

Dr Milad Shadrooh, AKA The Singing Dentist, who has 327k Instagram followers, educates on oral hygiene and health with melodies and parodies (@Singingdentist). "People often have horror stories about dentists, so when they see a cooler or comedy

side, it resonates with them," he says. And Dr Eskander says her booming social media presence came alongside a dental breakthrough. "My vision was inspired by two industry game-changers - Invisalign and Instagram. Instagram was still in its embryonic stages, but having watched friends in the creative industries, I believed there was a space for dentistry - particularly cosmetic dentistry, such as Invisalign,

whitening, veneers and bonding. Social media has been instrumental in empowering patients."

### EDUCATING THE MASSES

People want to know what treatments are available, how they work and the results they'll get. "My followers want to know the latest trends and devices, information on the safety and longevity of procedures, prices and how to plan treatments correctly," reveals Dr Zainab Al-Mukhtar, a cosmetic dentist, who has over 27k Instagram followers (@Dr.zainab.almukhtar). For Dr Sampson,

it's patients, dentists and dental students who get in touch. "I get questions about dental care and how to balance the oral microbiome [bacteria]. I make my posts evidence-based and break down research into layman's terms," she says.

### FINDING THE RIGHT DENTFLUENCER

While some focus on education, others post before and afters, and some share their personal life. But it's important to check their credentials. Ask questions, DM them and see if they engage with followers. If their branding isn't consistent, that's a red flag, says Dr Eskander. Dentists who show compassion and continuous learning are good benchmarks. **F**

### TRENDING TREATMENTS

"The toothcare brand Smile White is popular with our patients, especially the at-home aligners - which straighten teeth without the need for braces - and the Toothbalm, which keeps teeth glossy and white," says cosmetic dentist Dr Rajen Nagar, who has over 70k Instagram followers (@Doctorrajen). "In clinic, porcelain veneers have overtaken composite bonding. New technology and the fact that veneers can be made thinner means teeth don't have to be filed down to stubs and replaced, and the results still last 10-15 years."

### AT-HOME TEETH PLEASERS

#### FOR FIRST-CLASS CLEANING

**Brushd Electric Toothbrush** ✓, £59.99. Using sonic technology, this has three modes - clean, sensitive and white - as well as an interval timer so you can perfect your brushing. Plus, the heads are recyclable.

#### FOR WHITENING AND BRIGHTENING

**Vvardis White Enamel Serum Aletsch** ✓, £118. Using biomimetic tech and whitening teeth up to 10 shades, this is suitable for sensitive teeth and gums, veneers and porcelain crowns.

#### FOR FRESH BREATH

**Waken Whitening Mouthwash** ✓, £6. Certified carbon neutral, it's powered by pyrophosphates, fluoride and natural enzymes from papaya and pineapple that whiten your teeth without the use of hydrogen peroxide.

#### FOR THE PLANET

**Hello Goodbye Plaque, Hello Whitening Toothpaste Tablets** ✓, £7.99. The sustainable way to clean your teeth. Pop one in your mouth, chew, then brush. Kourtney K's a fan.

### TOP TEETH TIPS



Dr Sampson suggests asking your dentist for a saliva test. "We're now realising how much the saliva can reveal about both oral and general health. It can test for inflammatory markers, acidity levels and is the new age of personalised dentistry."



Dr Eskander says that while fluoride-free toothpaste is booming, it's important we get enough of the mineral. "Too much can be detrimental, but the amount in toothpaste is safe and helps to strengthen teeth. Without it, they're more at risk from erosion."



Dr Al-Mukhtar advises using an electric toothbrush and keeping the charger close to your phone charger so you charge it often. "Also, keep floss next to your toothbrush so that you layer the habit on to something you already do - this is known as habit stacking, and makes it stick."

Source: \*PlusDent. Photography: Getty Images, Instagram/Dr.ZainabAlMukhtar. Stockists: Brushd (Brushd.co.uk), Hello (Amazon.co.uk), Vvardis (Vardis.com), Waken (Wakencare.com)