# The 'Instagramable Smile': social media’s role in transforming dental aesthetics among younger generations



A rising trend known as the "Instagramable Smile" is shaping the way millennials and Generation Z approach dental aesthetics, with a marked preference for clear aligners as the go-to solution for teeth straightening. According to Smile White, a leading provider of clear aligners, demand from younger patients has surged notably over the past two years. This trend is closely tied to the pervasive influence of social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok, where curated images and influencer endorsements fuel a growing emphasis on appearance and self-confidence.

Clear aligners have gained popularity owing to their discreet nature and removability, making them an attractive option for young adults seeking subtle smile enhancements without the visibility of traditional braces. Dr Hussein Dalghous, joint CEO of Smile White, described clear aligners as more than just dental devices, framing them as a lifestyle choice that represents an investment in personal brand and mental wellbeing. Influencers documenting their teeth straightening journeys on social media have helped demystify the process, presenting it as non-invasive and accessible, thus normalising the pursuit of a perfected smile. Smile White’s survey found that appearance, confidence, and health rank as the primary motivations for choosing clear aligners, which are often seen as part of a broader wellness routine alongside fitness and skincare.

However, while social media drives the appetite for smile enhancement, it also harbours a darker side affecting smile confidence, especially among young people. Surveys conducted by Forbes Health and OnePoll in the United States paint a complex picture: over half of social media users admit to comparing their smiles with those seen online, and nearly half report that social media negatively impacts their confidence in their own smiles. More than half of respondents also try to hide their smiles in social situations, and a significant minority admit to editing their teeth in photographs before posting. These findings underscore the paradox of social media as both a catalyst for cosmetic dental trends and a source of heightened self-consciousness.

This dual dynamic reflects deeper generational shifts in dental aesthetics. Research shows a clear generational divide in preferences for teeth straightening methods, with Generation Z favouring dentist-fitted clear aligners, while millennials lean more towards at-home options. The financial commitment to smile enhancement is also notable, with millennials reportedly willing to spend more on average than their younger counterparts. Moreover, about a third of social media users have considered or already edited their teeth in photos, further highlighting how social media shapes self-image and the desire for perfection.

Aligners manufacturers have responded to these trends with targeted marketing strategies. Invisalign, for example, launched a creator-led campaign called "Stay Clear of Drama," prominently featuring TikTok influencers to promote the convenience and discretion of their product. By leveraging authentic content from popular creators, the campaign aims to resonate with Gen Z’s preference for genuine, hassle-free lifestyle enhancements, thus reinforcing the aligner's appeal as aligned with the ethos of this younger audience.

In conclusion, the "Instagramable Smile" phenomenon encapsulates the complex relationship between social media, self-image, and dental aesthetics. While platforms like Instagram and TikTok intensify pressures around appearance, they also make smile enhancement options like clear aligners more visible and accessible. This dual impact both drives demand for cosmetic solutions and highlights the significant role that mental wellbeing and confidence play in contemporary dental choices, with younger generations uniquely navigating this landscape.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/25461334.social-media-reshaping-young-peoples-smiles/?ref=rss), [[4]](https://disa.org/the-influence-of-social-media-on-smile-aesthetics/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/25461334.social-media-reshaping-young-peoples-smiles/?ref=rss), [[6]](https://www.marketingdive.com/news/invisalign-social-media-campaign-tiktok-instagram/651281/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://www.the-dentist.co.uk/content/news/social-media-harms-smile-confidence-finds-poll), [[3]](https://www.forbes.com/health/dental/social-media-impact-on-smiles/), [[5]](https://dimensionsofdentalhygiene.com/smile-insecurities-soar-how-social-medias-impact-on-self-image-is-changing-generations/), [[7]](https://www.dentistryiq.com/for-patients/cosmetic-dentistry/article/55089590/comparison-kills-why-gen-z-is-self-conscious-about-their-smile)
* Paragraph 4 – [[4]](https://disa.org/the-influence-of-social-media-on-smile-aesthetics/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[6]](https://www.marketingdive.com/news/invisalign-social-media-campaign-tiktok-instagram/651281/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/25461334.social-media-reshaping-young-peoples-smiles/?ref=rss), [[2]](https://www.the-dentist.co.uk/content/news/social-media-harms-smile-confidence-finds-poll), [[3]](https://www.forbes.com/health/dental/social-media-impact-on-smiles/), [[4]](https://disa.org/the-influence-of-social-media-on-smile-aesthetics/), [[7]](https://www.dentistryiq.com/for-patients/cosmetic-dentistry/article/55089590/comparison-kills-why-gen-z-is-self-conscious-about-their-smile)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/25461334.social-media-reshaping-young-peoples-smiles/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.the-dentist.co.uk/content/news/social-media-harms-smile-confidence-finds-poll> - A Forbes Health and OnePoll survey involving 2,000 American social media users revealed that 53% compare their smiles to others on social media, with 45% stating that social media negatively impacts their smile confidence. The survey also found that 56% of respondents try to hide their smiles in various situations, and 15% have edited their teeth in photos before posting them online. These findings highlight the significant influence of social media on self-perception and confidence, particularly among younger demographics.
3. <https://www.forbes.com/health/dental/social-media-impact-on-smiles/> - A survey by Forbes Health and OnePoll, involving 2,000 U.S. social media users, found that 53% compare their smiles to others on social media, with 45% stating that social media harms their smile confidence. The survey also revealed that 56% of respondents try to hide their smiles in various situations, and 15% have edited their teeth in photos before posting them online. These statistics underscore the significant impact of social media on self-image and confidence, especially among younger generations.
4. <https://disa.org/the-influence-of-social-media-on-smile-aesthetics/> - A survey indicates a generational divide in dental aesthetics, with clear aligners emerging as a preferred choice for teeth straightening. The survey highlights that 29% of respondents have considered dentist-fitted aligners, and 27% have considered at-home aligners. Gen Z shows a stronger inclination towards dentist-fitted aligners (36%), while millennials prefer at-home options (34%). The average amount individuals are willing to spend on smile enhancement is $2,960, with millennials leading at $3,542. The survey also notes that 30% of respondents have edited or considered editing their teeth in photos before posting them on social media.
5. <https://dimensionsofdentalhygiene.com/smile-insecurities-soar-how-social-medias-impact-on-self-image-is-changing-generations/> - A survey by Forbes Health and OnePoll, involving 2,000 U.S. social media users, found that 45% feel that social media negatively affects their smile confidence, with 53% comparing their smiles to others on social media. The survey also revealed that 56% of respondents try to hide their smiles in various situations, and 15% have edited their teeth in photos before posting them online. These findings highlight the significant impact of social media on self-image and confidence, particularly among younger generations.
6. <https://www.marketingdive.com/news/invisalign-social-media-campaign-tiktok-instagram/651281/> - Invisalign launched a creator-led social media campaign called 'Stay Clear of Drama' to promote the ease of its teeth aligners, focusing heavily on TikTok. The campaign includes partnerships with popular creators who share content highlighting the simplicity of Invisalign compared to traditional metal braces. This approach aims to appeal to Gen Z by showcasing the convenience and discreetness of clear aligners, aligning with the preferences of younger audiences who value authenticity and ease of use.
7. <https://www.dentistryiq.com/for-patients/cosmetic-dentistry/article/55089590/comparison-kills-why-gen-z-is-self-conscious-about-their-smile> - Social media has significantly impacted how Gen Z perceives their smiles, with many comparing their appearances to friends, celebrities, and influencers. A Forbes Health and OnePoll survey of 2,000 U.S. social media users revealed that 45% feel that social media negatively affects their smile confidence, with 53% comparing their smiles to others on social media. This constant comparison has led to increased self-consciousness among young people regarding their smiles.