

Teeth Whitening Guide

Discover Your Path to a Whiter Smile

Teeth "Whitening"

- Restoring teeth to their natural color by removing surface stains and debris from the tooth surface.
- Does not affect the base color of the tooth.
- Abrasives (physical) and acids (chemical) are typically used.

vs

Teeth "Bleaching"

- Changing the natural color of the tooth.
- Achieved by using a peroxide that removes both deep (intrinsic) staining and surface (extrinsic) staining.

In general, teeth "whitening" refers to any process that will make teeth appear whiter.

How Teeth Whitening Works

Teeth whitening removes stains and discoloration from teeth through bleaching with peroxides or by using mild abrasives to scrub away surface stains.

Common toothpaste abrasives:

- calcium carbonate
- dehydrated silica gels
- hydrated aluminum oxides
- magnesium carbonate
- phosphate salts and silicates

When whitening with a peroxide, stains are removed through a chemical (oxidation) reaction that breaks apart the staining compounds.

Top Causes of Staining & Discoloration

Extrinsic

- Outer layer (enamel) becomes discolored.
- Food/Drink causes: red pasta sauce, curry, dark-colored fruits (raspberries, blueberries, blackberries), coffee, tea, red wine, soda
- Other causes: Smoking, Excessive plaque/tartar build-up

Intrinsic

- Inner layer (dentin) becomes darkened and yellower than its natural yellow color.
- Common causes:
 - Tooth decay (turns teeth black/brown)
 - Excessive fluoride exposure as a child
 - Tetracycline antibiotics during pregnancy or before age 10
 - Trauma/Injuries
 - Silver (amalgam) fillings



Age-Related

- Combination of extrinsic and intrinsic factors.
- Common causes:
 - Dentin naturally yellows as you age
 - Thinning of enamel allowing dentin to show through
 - Exposure of root surfaces due to gum recession
 - Long-term effects of food and smoking
 - Trauma/Injuries

5 Ways to Naturally Whiten Teeth



Activated Coconut Charcoal



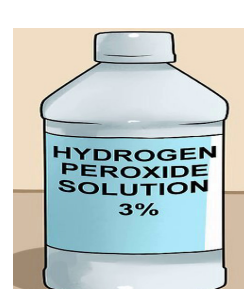
Baking Soda



Turmeric Paste



Coconut Oil Pulling



Hydrogen Peroxide

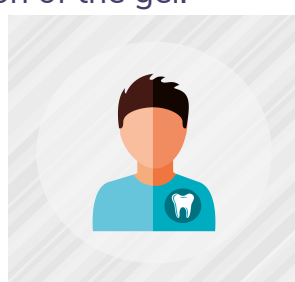
Professional "In-Office" Whitening



Involves the use of high-concentration whitening gels not available over the counter.

In-Office System: Gel is applied to your teeth by the dentist for 15 minute increments for up to an hour. A heat or light source may be used to accelerate or enhance the process.

Take-Home Kit: Use of custom mouth-trays molded from your teeth and made at the dental office. Trays are made of thin, flexible plastic to be filled with whitening gel and left on for a prescribed period of time, usually 15-30 minutes depending on the concentration of the gel.



vs

Over-the-Counter "At-Home" Whitening



Products contain lower concentrations of bleach, but can be effective over time if used as directed.

Strips: Polyethylene clear film sticks to the teeth and is left on for about 30 minutes each session, twice a day for 1-2 weeks.

Brush-On Gel Pens: Painted directly onto teeth with a small brush. Useful for selective teeth whitening on a single tooth.

Sugar-Free Chewing Gum: Mechanically removes food residue and stimulates saliva flow to help reduce plaque. Gum with xylitol has anti-bacterial qualities to prevent plaque build-up.

Toothpaste: Removes surface stains and plaque with chemical or abrasive agents.

Take-Home Kits: Semi-custom Boil-and-Bite or custom Direct-from-Lab retail kits. Made of thin, flexible plastic that you fill with whitening gel and leave on your teeth for a set period of time.

Teeth Whitening Warnings

You Should NOT Whiten If. . .

- You have active tooth decay (cavities)
- You have active gum disease
- You are pregnant or breast-feeding
- You have worn, chipped, or fractured teeth
- You have gum recession exposing the root surfaces

- You have sensitive teeth
- You have GERD or acid erosion of the teeth
- You have white spots on your teeth which will show more after whitening
- You have heavy tartar/plaque build-up on your teeth
- You are under 18 years old



Keeping Your Smile Healthy and Bright



- Try bleaching your teeth first with a peroxide gel and then use OTC non-bleach products on a daily basis. Then use whitening toothpaste, rinses, and gum after bleaching.
- Do a maintenance round of whitening every six months or so as needed. Whitening too frequently may cause prolonged sensitivity.
- Teeth whitening is one of the most conservative and cost-effective ways to improve your smile and your life.
- Before whitening your teeth, it is highly recommended that you first get a comprehensive exam by your dentist first to check for any conditions that may become worse when whitening.
- Remember to brush twice a day and follow a daily oral hygiene routine that will keep your pearly whites healthy and your smile bright.