

Teeth Whitening Introduction

What should you ask from your dentist?

You may want to start by speaking with your dentist. He or she can tell you whether whitening procedures would be effective for you. Whiteners may not correct all types of discoloration. For example, yellowish hue teeth will probably bleach well, brownish colored teeth may bleach less well, and grayish hue teeth may not bleach well at all. Likewise, bleaching may not enhance your smile if you have had bonding or tooth-colored fillings placed in your front teeth. The whitener will not effect the color of these materials, and they will stand out in your newly whitened smile. In these cases, you may want to investigate other options, like porcelain veneers or dental bonding.

What causes tooth discoloration?

The most common causes of stained teeth are: smoking, consumption of foods, drinking coffee, tea, wine, soda, and the aging process. In other words, our teeth naturally get more and more discolored as time goes by and we continue to live our lives.

Is the whitening process permanent?

For most people, the whitening treatment will last for many years. Your teeth have initially become stained due to consumption of foods and beverages. Upon the completion of your initial whitening process, your teeth will be restored to their natural white color. Smoking, eating certain foods, and drinking beverages like coffee, soda, and red wine will gradually darken teeth again. You may select to periodically whiten your teeth, thus reducing the likelihood of your teeth becoming stained again. After an initial treatment, most people do touchups at least once a month.

What is the teeth whitening process?

Teeth whitening is a whitening process that lightens and brightens tooth enamel discolorations. Dental whitening systems use an effective whitening solution retained in a custom-fitted mouthpiece that is worn over your teeth for 1-4 hours per day, or even overnight. Many people notice an immediate whitening of their teeth within a few hours of whitening, but it usually takes 20 - 40 hours of cumulative whitening time to complete the whitening process. (This is true for all at-home dental whitening systems, regardless of the manufacturer.) You can separate whitening hours over the course of a few days (if you're in a hurry to benefit from whiter teeth) or a few months. Using professional-strength whitening gel formulated with 22% carbamide peroxide is the most widely used and most desirable path to establishing effective dental whitening.

How do teeth whitening systems remove stains?

Teeth whitening gel removes most stains by generating a gentle action that whitens your teeth. As hydrogen peroxide, the active ingredient in the gel, is broken down, oxygen acts upon the stained organic deposits thus oxidizing and making them whiter. This process changes the overall tooth color back to its natural unstained color. Your tooth structure remains unchanged. Years of clinical tests have demonstrated the safety and effectiveness of this system. Over 95% of people who use similar teeth whitening systems achieve some level of teeth whitening. Dental work including crowns, bridges, bondings, and fillings is not affected by dental whitening systems

What is in office bleaching?

If you are a candidate for bleaching, your dentist may suggest a procedure that can be done in his or her office. This procedure is called chairside bleaching and may require more than one office visit. Each visit may take from 30 minutes to one hour. During chairside bleaching, the dentist will apply either a protective gel to your gums or a rubber shield to protect the oral soft tissues. A bleaching agent is then applied to the teeth, and a special light may be used to enhance the action of the agent. Lasers have been used during tooth whitening procedures to enhance the action of the whitening agent.

For example ZOOM! 2 Advanced Power.

What are at home procedures and products?

There are several types of products available for use at home, which can either be dispensed by your dentist or purchased over-the-counter.

Bleaching solutions: These products contain peroxide, which actually bleach the tooth enamel. These products typically rely on percent carbamide peroxide as the bleaching agent, carbamide peroxide comes in several different concentrations (10%, 16%, 22%). Peroxide-containing whiteners typically come in a gel and are placed in a mouthguard. Usage regimens vary. Some products are used for about twice a day for 2 weeks, and others are intended for overnight use for 1-2 weeks. If you obtain the bleaching solution from your dentist, she/ he can make a custom-fitted mouthguard for you that will fit your teeth precisely. Currently, only dentist dispensed home use 10% carbamide peroxide tray applied gels carry the ADA Seal.

You also may want to speak with your dentist should any side effects become bothersome. For example, teeth can become sensitive during the period when you are using the bleaching solution. In many cases, this sensitivity is temporary and should lessen once the treatment is finished. Some people also experience soft tissue irritation - either from a tray that doesn't fit properly or from solution that may come in contact with the tissues. If you have concerns about such side effects, you should discuss them with your dentist.

Toothpastes: All toothpastes help remove surface stain through the action of mild abrasives. "Whitening" toothpastes in the ADA Seal of Acceptance program have special chemical or polishing agents that provide additional stain removal effectiveness. Unlike bleaches, these ADA Accepted products do not alter the intrinsic color of teeth.

What is a whitening tray and how does it work?

It is an inconspicuous appliance designed to fit comfortably over the teeth and hold the whitening gel in place. Custom-fitted trays optimize the whitening process by keeping the whitening gel perpetually in contact with your teeth. Our custom-fitted trays are very thin and clear, and are crafted individually to fit your mouth.

What is the difference between the instant teeth whitening kit and the custom professional whitening trays?

Although both mouthpieces are safe, the custom-fit whitening trays created by our lab are more precise and more comfortable to wear. Ours are the exact mouthpieces that a dentist would provide. They conserve whitening gel, which saves you money, and are more appropriate for people with gum sensitivities. Also, professional mouthpieces are much easier for you to create since they do not require boiling water. With custom mouthpieces, you leave the creation process up to us.

How important are the custom made whitening trays?

Please note, trays that fit snugly on your teeth are essential for proper whitening and consistent whitening results.

Is it safe to whiten my teeth at home?

Yes. In fact, many dentists consider this whitening process the safest cosmetic procedure available today. It is the exact same process used in 95% of dental offices nationwide. The whitening process safely whitens your teeth to eliminate discoloration caused by tobacco, food, coffee, tea, wine, soda, and the mere process of aging. Our whitening system will not harm the enamel, dentin or pulp of your teeth.

How long does the whitening process take?

Our thin, soft plastic trays are comfortable enough to wear while you sleep. Our sticky gel formula stays in the trays, which press the gel directly onto your teeth. The gel formula is gentle enough to use for hours at a time, or even overnight. You should continue the process for a complete and full curing, which generally takes 12 days. However, after only 4 days you should begin to see professional whitening results. The gel only activates for up to 3 hours, therefore sleeping in your trays will not cause over-whitening.

Please note, do not eat or drink while wearing your trays!

Are there any side effects?

Some people experience temporary tooth sensitivity during treatment, which is always relieved upon the discontinuation or completion of treatment. There are no other significant side effects.

Who may benefit from tooth whitening?

Almost everyone will see noticeable results.

