

Teeth whitening - safe methods for confident smiles

Are you self-conscious about smiling? Do you suffer from discoloured or stained teeth and are you considering teeth whitening? Discoloured or stained teeth can occur for a number of reasons. Understanding why this is happening before implementing a teeth-whitening treatment is important. There are different types of teeth whitening treatments available and each carries a different level of risk, being informed is key in making a safe decision that is best suited to your individual circumstances.



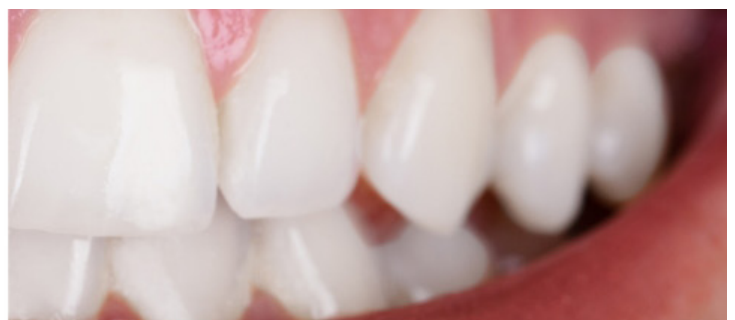
What is teeth whitening

Teeth whitening is the process of lightening the colour of teeth to mask or remove any stains and discoloration. Only dental professionals are qualified to diagnose and advise on the cause of teeth staining, or discolouration and what treatments would be best suited to each individual.

Discoloured & stained teeth - the causes

Understanding why your teeth are discoloured or stained is very important because each will require a different approach and type of treatment. As we age, our teeth naturally begin to yellow and change colour, even for individuals with the best of oral health routines, this is normal due to the foods and drinks we consume. With vivid colour, such as black tea and red wine. Even fresh, healthy food that oxidises quickly can cause stains. For example avocados will go brown and black on your teeth. External (Extrinsic) staining can be removed by dentists via a number of methods however not all discolouration is due to external and lifestyle influences. A genetic disposition or trauma to the mouth and teeth can cause what is referred to as internal (intrinsic) staining; these problems are more complex and require a different and varied approach. Crystalline structure of teeth is hard, and yet it is slightly porous, and some of the things we consume on a daily basis, eventually make their way and absorbed into teeth. Your dentist is the best person to diagnose and advise on the best options available. To whiten your teeth, and to help you work out what is causing the stains and what you might do to change your lifestyle to minimise the risks of staining in the future.

Restorative treatments like crowns, veneers, fillings, implants, or dentures will not whiten. Generally, dentists will match the colour of the specific treatment to the natural colour of your teeth where possible.

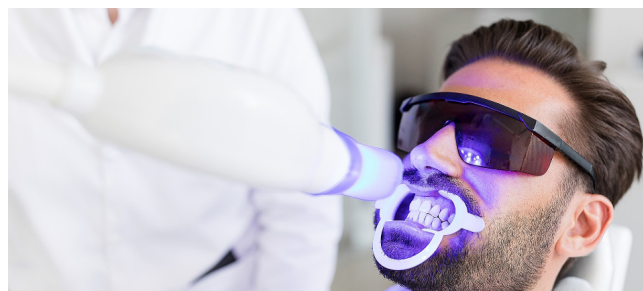


Safe Teeth Whitening

Types of treatments

In-chair teeth whitening

Professional dental and oral health practitioners are the only people qualified to administer in-chair teeth whitening. They use a combination of bleach and ultraviolet light or lasers for almost immediate results.



In-home professional teeth whitening kits

Oral health professionals may offer in-home teeth whitening kits for those individuals where it may be more practicable. This includes making custom-fitted trays from an impression of your teeth to take home with a bleaching gel supplied by your dentist. Be sure to follow your dentist's instructions for application, otherwise there is a higher risk of damage to teeth and gums.



Whitening toothpaste

Whitening toothpaste often includes abrasive and whitening agents. These agents reduce and in some cases repel external staining. There can be risks associated with using teeth whitening toothpastes, always ask your dentist which is the most suitable option for you.



DIY teeth whitening - HIGH RISK

DIY teeth whitening kits from anyone other than a dental or oral health professional poses a higher risk to your teeth and gums. Discuss this with your dentist first.

Bi-carbonate of Soda mouthwash & toothpaste

Whilst there are many in-home recipes for DIY bicarb toothpaste, dental professionals do not recommend using bicarbonate of soda as a homemade toothpaste. Dentists recommend using Toothpaste with fluoride to help prevent tooth decay. However, when bicarbonate of soda is diluted safely with water into a mouthwash, this can reduce some stains and help reduce the acid in your mouth.



Teeth Whitening - THE RISKS

Speak with your dentist or oral health professional before applying any tooth whitening treatments. Everyone has a unique mouth and only dental and oral health professionals can assess what risks the different treatments might pose to each individual.

Common side effects post post whitening treatments

Hot and cold sensitivity for up to 48 hours.

Irritation to the gums, mouth, or tongue.

*These symptoms should be temporary, speak with your dentist if symptoms continue.

Potential risks without the direction of your dentist

Permanent tooth and gum damage.

Chemical burns to the mouth, gums, and tongue.

Severe pain

*Permanent damage potentially has lifelong side effects on your overall health and well-being.