



Brighter, whiter smile

Whitening procedures and products can help restore a whiter smile. But be aware. Certain tooth whitening procedures being done by nondentists at salons and spas may not be what's best for you.

A thorough exam is recommended by a licensed dentist before having any tooth whitening procedure. You may have problems with some of the solutions especially if you have many fillings, crowns, and extremely dark stains.

After a thorough exam, your dentist can determine if bleaching is right for you. The following are common treatment options your dentist may recommend.



PRESCRIPTION BLEACHING KITS

These are dispensed by a licensed dentist and contain peroxides that will bleach the tooth enamel. Gel whiteners are placed in a tray similar to a mouth guard. By obtaining the bleaching solution from your dentist, they can make a custom-fitted tray specifically designed to fit your teeth. Poorly fitting trays can irritate your gums and cause tissue burning.

ZOOM WHITENING

Also known as power whitening, this is a high concentration of hydrogen peroxide gel coupled with a high-intensity light used to whiten the teeth. This in-office procedure takes about one hour. The teeth whitening lasts about three years.

WHITENING PRODUCTS

Over-the-counter whitening products are available, including whitening strips and gels. Bleaching compounds are typically peroxide-based at lower concentrations than dentist-prescribed options. Whitening toothpastes rely on abrasive compounds to remove surface stains, though some also contain low levels of peroxide to help lighten tooth color. Look for products that have the ADA Seal of Acceptance.