

TOOTH WHITENING

Tooth whitening is the process of removing stains from the enamel of your teeth by applying a special bleaching material. The bleach material penetrates the outer layer of the enamel and takes out stains that cannot be removed otherwise. Professional tooth whitening systems are administered and overseen by your dentist and dental team.

1. What are my options for professional Tooth Whitening?

Professional tooth whitening can be done in the dental office or with a take home kit. Both of these approaches typically use a peroxide- based bleach solution to whiten your teeth.

Tooth whitening done in the dental office involves applying a strong peroxide material to your teeth for a period of time. This bleach solution is removed at the end of your dental appointment. During the appointment, a laser or other light may be used to increase the effect of in-office bleaching. Regardless of whether the light is used or not, you will leave the dental office with notably whiter teeth.

Some dental offices prefer to send you home with a professional take home tooth whitening kit. This includes your own custom-made teeth trays plus a supply of peroxide-based tooth bleaching solution. The trays are worn for a period of time each day according to your dentist's instructions. Generally, the take home kit lasts a few weeks and your teeth become notably whiter over this time.

2. What are the advantages of the various Tooth Whitening options?

Professional in-office bleaching provides the most immediate results.

Professional take home bleaching has the most research proving its effectiveness and is less costly than in-office bleaching.

Non-professional bleaching systems have more risk of complications (i.e. tooth sensitivity) and less predictability.

3. What are the disadvantages of the various Tooth Whitening options?

Professional in-office bleaching is the costliest tooth whitening option and provides the quickest result. It usually requires some take home treatment to achieve the most lasting outcome.

Professional take home tooth whitening often takes several weeks to produce the desired outcome. The effectiveness of the tooth whitening depends on your ability to comply with wearing the tooth trays as directed.

4. What are the risks of Tooth Whitening?

Some inherent risks exist with any tooth whitening system. You must take the following factors into consideration when deciding whether to bleach your teeth.

There is risk that your teeth or gums will become sensitive to the bleach solution and you may need to discontinue the treatment before the desired tooth color is achieved.

In the most extreme cases, tooth whitening may lead to tooth sensitivity that requires root canal treatment in order for it to resolve.

Tooth whitening will not alter the color of existing dental restorations. Sometimes dental work must be replaced if you want it to match your new, lighter teeth after tooth whitening is done.

Those people with poor dental home care or diets high in staining foods such as coffee, red wine, tea or berries may find their teeth become stained again more quickly than expected. Normally tooth whitening must be repeated periodically to maintain the brightness of your smile.

