

TOOTH WHITENING



Tooth whitening or bleaching is offered for cosmetic purposes. It provides a solution to those individuals who have discoloured or stained enamel and are not satisfied with the appearance of their teeth.

Tooth whitening does just that – making the teeth look lighter, brighter and younger.

There are 2 types of tooth stains:

Intrinsic Stain: this means the stain occurs from within the tooth. It cannot be removed by brushing or flossing and sometimes externally bleaching these teeth is only partially effective.

Tetracycline (an antibiotic) taken during the tooth's formative years is incorporated into the developing tooth structure giving it a "striped" appearance.

Trauma leading to changes within the pulp (blood vessels and nerves) of the tooth may lead to a pinkish "blushing" of the tooth.

Following root canal therapy some teeth require "internal" bleaching, whitening the structure from the inside of the root.

Fluorosis occurs from an excess of Fluoride ingestion during tooth maturation giving the tooth a whitish "mottled" look. External whitening will not improve their appearance.

Extrinsic Staining: This is staining to the external tooth surface. Some sources of extrinsic stain are cigarettes, coffee, tea or food such as beetroot. This type of stain can sometimes be treated by a professional prophylaxis (cleaning) alone.

Different stains require different solutions. Experience has shown "over the counter" bleaches from the pharmacy or supermarket to be ineffective for most patients. Depending on the shade of your teeth your dentist may suggest:

- In-house whitening activated with light of the blue spectrum
- In-house whitening using a stronger solution of carbamide and hydrogen peroxide.
- Take-home whitening- which scientific studies have shown to provide the most satisfying outcome for 3-5 years after application.

Approximately 1% of people experience tooth sensitivity during the procedure. These symptoms disappear within one to three days after completion of the treatment. It is important to follow the manufacturer's instructions precisely. If any side effects are more than mild or persist, stop using the whitener and contact the surgery.

Tooth whitening is a quick, easy and affordable way to improve your smile.