

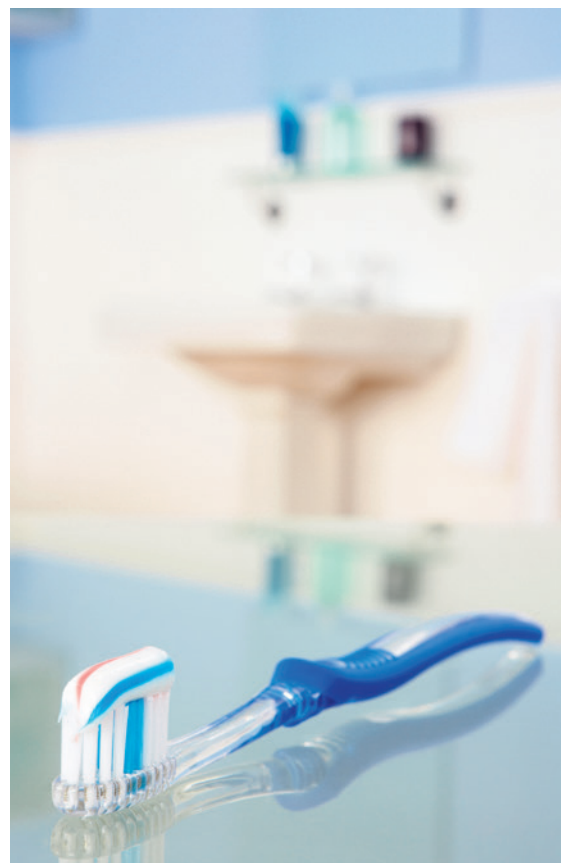
TEETH WHITENING



By James Goolnik BDS MSc

Teeth whitening or bleaching is the most popular cosmetic dental procedure. Our expert dentist James talks you through all your options.

The first thing people notice is...your smile so why not make the most of it. The most cost effective way to dramatically improve your smile is to whiten your teeth. There are a plethora of kits on sale now to whiten your teeth by why go to a dental professional? In the UK only a registered dental professional can legally whiten your teeth. Anyone else offering teeth whitening (hairdressers, beauty therapists etc) will not have the correct training and knowledge and could permanently damage your teeth and gums. You only have one set, so why trust a kit bought on the internet with



Brushing is the first step to a whiter smile



Whitestrips in place

your pearly whites? Some kits are acidic and will dissolve the enamel from your teeth leaving you with permanent sensitivity.

The most tested product to whiten teeth is peroxide, since 1989 it has been used to successfully whiten teeth, usually sold as Hydrogen or Carbamide peroxide. In Europe under the Cosmetic Products (Safety) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 only dental practitioners can sell tooth-whitening products containing or releasing up to 6% hydrogen peroxide. Any peroxide products over 6% are banned in the EU as they are more likely to cause teeth sensitive and chemical burns.

Like skin and hair, teeth vary in colour. They tend to get darker as we age and with more frequent exposure to staining foods such as coffee and red wine. Whitening by a dental professional will not remove the surface of your teeth or change their shape. It merely uses oxidising agents to break down the stain molecules that are trapped inside your teeth.

Whitening does not change the shape of your teeth and if you want to improve the shape and colour of your teeth then bonding or veneers may be a better option. Teeth whitening however is non-invasive, cost effective, easy to maintain and for most people, the first step to improving their smile.

So what are your options?

Whitening toothpastes do not affect the natural colour of your teeth, they may be effective at removing staining or maintaining the colour of your recently bleached teeth. Be wary of the smokers toothpaste as they can be abrasive and not good to use over long term. One way to check is to look at the Relative Dentine Abrasivity (RDA value) of a toothpaste. Anything under 70 is ideal for a daily toothpaste. Some of those bought online can actually harm your teeth as they contain acids/abrasives that can cause permanent damage. The best you can achieve with whitening toothpastes, is to help prevent stains from forming.

Whitening at the Dentist

The only difference in the hundreds of dentist prescribed systems out there is the



Before

concentration of the gels and the way they are applied to your teeth. There are three main ways of carrying out tooth whitening

A) Professional over the counter kits e.g. OralB 3d whitestrips. Procter & Gamble released their original Crest whitestrips over 18 years ago and is the entry level in professional tooth whitening. They are thin disposable plastic strips impregnated with a hydrogen peroxide gel designed to mould to your teeth. They are worn for around 30 minutes, once per



After just five days

day for 10- 14 days and produce a visible colour change in most people after around three days. Strips do not rely on you getting the correct amount of gel in the correct place in your trays. Unlike tray based systems the optimum amount of whitening gel is already in place. This gives a consistent and controlled dose of whitening gel.

Pros: Cheapest proven option, no moulds just

continued on page 24 ▷



Before In Office whitening



After ninety minutes



Home Whitening of just upper teeth to see the contrast

TEETH WHITENING

collect from your dentist, transparent and less bulky than trays.

Cons: Takes 10-14 days to get full effect, teeth can be sensitive for this time, only whitens your front teeth, fiddly to use and only works on straight teeth

B) Home whitening kits with bespoke trays. Custom made trays taken from moulds of your teeth that you fill with a gel and wear from between 30 minutes and overnight to bleach your teeth. You wear the trays once per day for 7-10 days until your teeth are white.

Pros: More cost effective, can just do upper or lower teeth (good if they are not all dark or you gag), whitens all your teeth, trays can be reused for years.

Cons: Takes 10-14 days to get full effect, teeth can be sensitive for this time, need to be dextrous to use the gels and trays

C) In-office or laser whitening such as Philips Zoom. This uses a stronger, more active peroxide gel which is then accelerated using a LED or laser light. The light acts as a heat source to speed up the process. It takes around an hour and you get the same result as wearing 14 days of trays. You usually get trays at the end to top-up.

Pros: One visit, fast result

Cons: Can sensitive on the day they are treated, only able to whiten the front 10 teeth, more expensive.

Your dental professional can help to guide you to the best way to achieve a whiter smile and then how to maintain it. Your whiter smile should last up to three years depending on your diet and whether you smoke. All methods will need regular top-ups to maintain the colour.

Can anyone whiten their teeth?

In the UK you have to be over 18 to have your teeth whitened. It is also not advisable if you are pregnant or are currently breast feeding.

What if I'm not happy with the results?

If you're concerned about teeth whitening that was carried out by a dental professional first contact the practice. Often they can change gels or discuss other options to improve your smile. If you think your teeth whitening has been carried out illegally (that is, by someone



We can even whiten a dead tooth. This man had an accident and the tooth died. We used whitening gel to whiten the tooth from the inside out.

not qualified or registered to perform it) contact the General Dental Council on 0207 167 6000 or email illegalpractice@gdc-uk.org.

What if I experience gum discomfort or tooth sensitivity?

Some people may experience tooth sensitivity or gum discomfort when using whitening products but this is only temporary and NOT harmful. It soon fades once you have completed the course of treatment. If significant discomfort or sensitivity does develop, try reducing your application time or even skipping a day and extend the total number of days of your whitening. There are

now a number of gels (tooth moose, Relief gel) specially designed to be worn in your trays after whitening to reduce this sensitivity.

Will whitening affect my crowns, veneers, fillings or any other dental work?

Whitening gel will ONLY whiten natural teeth; it will not whiten caps, crowns, veneers, fillings or dentures. If they have surface stains and have darkened since they were placed, whitening often lifts these stains but cannot make them whiter than when your dentist originally fitted them. If you do have any dental concerns consult your dentist to determine if the tooth whitening is appropriate for you.



JAMES GOOLNIK BDS MSC



James Goolnik is a dentist and founder of the Bow Lane Dental Group which is in London. James is a past-president of the British Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry, the largest organisation dedicated to advancing the art and science of cosmetic

dentistry in the United Kingdom. James helps train the dental team worldwide regarding tooth whitening. His book Brush is a number one best seller on Amazon and all the profits go to Dentaaid. The first project was in Malawi where James installed a two surgery dental practice and lead a dental team to deliver a skills transfer workshop.

His current project is tackling Sugar being used as a reward

for children.

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