

WHITEN YOUR TEETH AND TURN BACK THE CLOCK

This article is about tooth whitening and the different options available to help you achieve your desired look. These options include over-the-counter products such as trays, brush-ons and strips. I will also give you information on teeth whitened professionally.

If your teeth are darkening from age or just not what you would desire, you can still have a radiant smile. Today, for most of us, keeping ourselves healthy and physically fit is important. A more beautiful smile will go a long way to making you feel and look your best.

There is information about over-the-counter whiteners that the consumer should know. Some of these products may contain acid based agents that could damage your teeth or gums. Others come with trays that cover your teeth with the product, but these trays are not custom fitted. This can result in uneven tooth contact. The overall effect may be inconsistent.

Whitening strips or brush-on gels are also popularly marketed. The concepts sound good, but both have their limitations. The concentrations of whitening agents are generally lower than what your dentist can provide. Whitening strips are one size fits all. They are flat strips designed to stick on your teeth. The majority of people do not have the same size teeth and teeth certainly are not flat. Consequently, some areas of the teeth may not be treated properly or not whiten at all.

Brush-on products can be technique sensitive as they rely on your teeth being dry before and after applying. This may not happen consistently. Some of the product may stay on and some may rub off. Again, the results can be varied and limited. Whitening strips and brush-on gels can lighten teeth, but may be best used for maintenance as opposed to initial whitening.

Professional whitening will penetrate the deeper intrinsic stains within the teeth, not just the surface. It achieves the best results, lasts longer and has a much higher degree of patient satisfaction. It is a safe method of whitening that has been monitored for well over a decade by the American Dental Association.

There are two ways that professional whitening is accomplished. The at home method is with a custom, form-fitting and properly sculpted tray that will fit over your teeth. The whitening gel is placed into the trays which are then worn overnight or (depending on the product) worn twice a day for one half hour each. There will be definite, noticeable results in about two weeks.

The other method, that many patients prefer, is to be able to leave the dental office with the immediate results of whiter teeth. The whitening process takes about an hour in the dental office. The treatment may involve a specialized light to accelerate the whitening process. This method is very effective and provides the instant gratification many of us

want. Depending on the product the dentist uses, you can leave with teeth up to eight shades brighter, even more.

As a consumer, a variety of whitening options is available to you. Some of these options may not provide you with your desired results and again, may be best used for touch-ups. Professional whitening is your safest and most effective method. It is a simple way to improve your appearance and turn back the clock.