THE HIDDEN DANGERS OF
TEETH WHITENING
AND HOW TO AVOID THEM
The Hidden Dangers of Teeth Whitening—and How to Avoid Them

Coffee, red wine, tomato sauce, berries, and even too much fluoride can all stain your teeth.

These stains can be either within the enamel of teeth (which happens from mothers using antibiotics during pregnancy or exposure to fluoride too early), or they can be on the outside of the enamel (from tobacco use, plaque and tartar buildup, or food and drinks).

Plenty of people have slightly yellowed or stained teeth, mostly outside the enamel, even if they see their dentist regularly.

However, people are often judged by their smiles; to some, it’s an indicator of overall hygiene and self-care. Fortunately, there are ways to whiten your teeth and help get rid of those judgmental looks and thoughts, improving people’s first impressions when they meet you. Tooth whitening is an easy, generally safe process, but there are some things to keep in mind before you embark on the process.

Whitening Toothpaste and Mouthwash

Whitening toothpaste and mouthwash are among the easiest ways to whiten your teeth. It’s sold in grocery stores and drugstores,
which makes it easy to find, and it’s cheaper than other ways to whiten your teeth. They’re safe if used as directed, but, if they aren’t, they can cause some problems. They also only remove surface stains, rather than whitening stains under the enamel.

According to SmilesMatter.com, whitening toothpastes, such as ones made by Colgate and Crest, can contain acidulated fluoride.

This is normally a good thing; it helps fluoride uptake by your teeth.

However, if you have porcelain crowns, you may want to rethink using ones that contain acidulated fluoride. Acid, combined with fluoride, creates hydrofluoric acid.

This isn’t necessarily bad for your teeth, but it is bad for any porcelain crowns you might have. Since porcelain, a glass product, is etched by hydrofluoric acid, the glaze on the crown is gradually eaten away.

So the toothpaste can help your natural teeth, but it will make your porcelain crowns less attractive.

Only you can decide if this home whitening option is best for you.

Whitening mouthwash can come with problems of its own. Patients have reported burns, lip swelling, oral discomfort, and more adverse effects, according to AdverseEvents.com. Not everyone will experience these effects, though. Before buying a big bottle of whitening mouthwash, try finding a sample or travel-sized

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bottle, or at least the smallest bottle the brand offers. That way, you’re not out as much money as if you bought a big bottle and then found out you couldn’t use it.

**Home Whitening Strips and Trays**

With trays, you apply the whitening gel on the inside, then put the trays in your mouth. There are two options with them.

The first is to use the tray that comes with the whitener. The other is to ask your dentist to make a tray for you.

Like tooth whitening strips, the trays that come with the whitener isn’t fitted specifically to you and so can cause leaking of the peroxide solution, which can irritate your gums.

If you decide to instead ask your dentist to make a tray for you, you can expect it to cost quite a bit more.

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However, the custom trays won’t leak the peroxide onto your gums, so it’s better protection.

**Whiteners Used by Dentists**

AACD.com, the site for the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry, describes in-office tooth whitening as a process that can whiten teeth up to ten shades within just an hour. It involves applying a protective gel to your gums to keep them from being irritated or damaged by the whitener, or they may use a soft rubber shield that protects the soft tissue in your mouth.

Similarly to whitening with strips or trays, there is still some risk of irritation to the gums, but it’s much less than with those two options.

The dentist then applies the bleaching agent to your front teeth and uses a light, heat source, or even a laser to activate the bleaching agent.

While this is the most effective way to whiten your teeth, both because of how it’s applied and because it can whiten stains under the surface of the enamel, it’s also the most expensive.

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You may need to return for a second visit, depending on how badly your teeth are stained and the results you got from the first treatment; even so, two sessions in a dental chair take far less time to get the results you want than do the other options.

Only you can decide which tooth whitening option is best for you. Their costs vary greatly, from a couple of dollars for a tube of toothpaste to several hundred dollars for a whitening session performed by a dentist.

The length of time it takes to get the results you want also varies. If you want immediate results, the in-office option is best for you.

If you don't mind waiting for quite some time to get the results you want, toothpaste might be the option you go with.

Whatever you choose, you’ll eventually have whiter teeth, and that makes for a better smile, looking younger and healthier, and making a better impression when you meet new people.

Dr. Darren Flowers offer great deals on teeth whitening procedures.

So if you’re thinking about getting your teeth whitened, you might want to give his office a call to get a consultation. Call now: **623-551-8000** or visit [http://flowersdentistry.com/](http://flowersdentistry.com/).

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