
Caring for Tooth Staining and Discolouration

Why do my teeth have stains and discolouration?

Most stains are caused by age, tobacco, tea and coffee. Other types of stains can be caused by antibiotics, such as tetracycline, or too much fluoride.

What treatments are used for stained teeth?

Treatments include a number of over-the-counter whitening systems, whitening toothpastes, and the latest high-tech option; laser and power tooth bleaching. For maximum whitening, experts agree that peroxide is usually the treatment of choice.

Supervised bleaching procedures that are done in-office and at-home have become among the most popular treatment options. In some cases, the procedure is performed entirely in the office, utilising a light or heat source to speed up the bleaching process. In other cases, the procedure is one that you complete entirely at home. Another popular procedure is one that a in-office follows by a at-home combined bleaching.

At-home procedures, sometimes called nightguard vital bleaching, consist of placing a bleaching solution, usually a peroxide mixture, in a tray that has been custom fitted for your mouth by us. The bleaching solutions may vary in potency and may be worn for an hour, or throughout the night. We can advise you on the appropriate type of application and the length of time needed to whiten your teeth, based on the severity of tooth discolouration and your specific needs.

How effective are bleaching system?

Bleaching is effective in lightening most stains caused by age, tobacco, coffee and tea. Based on clinical studies, 96% of patients with these kinds of stains experience some lightening effect. Other types of stains, such as those produced by tetracycline use or fluorosis (too much fluoride at tooth formation), respond to bleaching less reliably and not fully predictable. If you have a tooth colour filling when your teeth are bleached, the filling will stay yellow (restorations do not responds to bleaching).

Are there any side effects to tooth bleaching?

In some studies, patients have experienced uncomfortable short-term side effects eg. sensitivity (up to 25%) when bleaching or having teeth bleached. Hydrogen peroxide can increase temperature sensitivity in the teeth, particularly at higher concentrations; nightguards often cause gum irritation.

Please feel free to contact your Dentist at any stage if you have questions.