



Healthy People Dental

There are many teeth whitening systems and products including whitening toothpastes, over-the-counter gels, rinses, strips, trays, and whitening products obtained from a dentist.

Teeth whitening is ideal for people who have healthy, unrestored teeth (no fillings) and gums. Individuals with yellow tones to their teeth respond best. But this cosmetic procedure is not recommended for everyone.

Is teeth whitening right for you?

Whitening Systems

Whitening Toothpastes

All toothpastes help remove surface stains, because they contain mild abrasives. Some whitening toothpastes contain gentle polishing or chemical agents that provide additional stain removal effectiveness. Whitening toothpastes can help remove surface stains only and do not contain bleach; over-the-counter and professional whitening products contain carbamide peroxide or hydrogen peroxide that helps lighten the color deep in the tooth. Whitening toothpastes can lighten the tooth's color by about one shade. In contrast, light-activated whitening conducted in your dentist's office can make your teeth three to eight shades lighter.

Over-the-Counter Whitening Strips and Gels

Whitening gels are clear, peroxide-based gels applied with a small brush directly to the surface of your teeth. Instructions vary depending on the strength of the peroxide. Follow the directions on the product carefully. Initial results are seen in a few days and final results are sustained for about four months.

Whitening strips are very thin, virtually invisible strips that are coated with a peroxide-based whitening gel. The strips are applied twice daily for 30 minutes for 14 days. Initial results are seen in a few days and final results are sustained for about four months.

Whitening Rinses

Among the newest whitening products available are whitening rinses. Like most mouthwashes, they freshen breath and help reduce dental plaque and gum disease. But these products also include ingredients, such as hydrogen peroxide in some, which whiten teeth.

Manufacturers say it may take 12 weeks to see results. You just swish them around in your mouth for 60 seconds twice a day before brushing your teeth. However, some experts say that rinses may not be as effective as other over-the-counter whitening products. Because a whitening rinse is only in contact with the teeth for such a short time -- just two minutes a day compared to 30 minutes for many strips -- it may have less of an effect.



Tray-Based Tooth Whiteners

Tray-based tooth whitening systems, purchased either over-the-counter or from a dentist, involve filling a mouth guard-like tray with a gel whitening solution -- which contains a peroxide-bleaching agent. The tray is worn for a period of time, generally from a couple of hours a day to every day during the night for up to four weeks and even longer (depending on the degree of discoloration and desired level of whitening).

In-Office Whitening

In-office bleaching provides the quickest way to whiten teeth. With in-office bleaching, the whitening product is applied directly to the teeth. These products can be used in combination with heat, a special light, or a laser. Results are seen in only one, 30- to 60-minute treatment. But to achieve dramatic results, several appointments are usually needed. However, with in-office bleaching, dramatic results can be seen after the first treatment. This type of whitening is also the most expensive approach.

How Long Do Teeth Whitening Effects Last?

Teeth whitening is not permanent. People who expose their teeth to foods and beverages that cause staining may see the whiteness start to fade in as little as one month. Those who avoid foods and beverages that stain may be able to wait one year or longer before another whitening treatment or touch-up is needed.

The degree of whiteness will vary from individual to individual depending on the condition of the teeth, the level of staining, and the type of bleaching system used.

Healthy Mouth Recipe

Crunchy Chopped Salad Recipe

Ingredients:

1 cup celery, chopped
1/4 cup red pepper, chopped
1 tablespoon onion (red, green or white) finely chopped
4 leaves fresh basil, chopped, or 1/4 teaspoon dried basil
2 drops stevia, or 1 teaspoon honey, to taste
1 teaspoon raspberry vinegar
1 teaspoon cold pressed extra virgin olive oil (optional)
Sea salt, a pinch or two to taste
Fresh ground peppercorn, a pinch or two to taste

Directions:

Chop the vegetables and basil, if using fresh, and place in a medium bowl. If using dried basil, keep in a separate bowl.

In a small bowl, mix the vinegar, stevia (or honey), salt, pepper, olive oil (optional), and 2 teaspoons of water. Add dried basil if using this instead of fresh. Stir and pour over vegetables. Toss well to coat.