

TOOTH WHITENING

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TOOTH WHITENING PROCEDURES IS IT FOR YOU?

In this section, we will cover a brief history of teeth bleaching procedures and then discuss who may benefit from these techniques. In addition, we will review some of the alternative methods that are also available either with porcelain veneers or home care that can help to give you a brighter smile.

Aging



Smoking



Tetracycline Stains



Before and After Tooth Bleaching



Photos courtesy of Discus Dental

If you are interested in whiter, brighter teeth, never before has there been such a variety of options available to patients as there is today. There are bleaching systems and cosmetic restorative procedures that can offer the opportunity for whiter smiles to everyone.

Teeth whitening procedures have been performed for over one hundred years. As far back as 1877, procedures involving the use of oxalic acid to whiten teeth were reported. Hydrogen peroxide was introduced as a tooth bleaching agent back in 1884 and in 1918, the use of high-intensity lights in conjunction with the hydrogen peroxide was used to speed up the bleaching process, according to a report by the [ADA](#).

The [Council on Dental Therapeutics](#) has thoroughly studied the teeth whiteners (specifically peroxide) and found no significant adverse health effects have been associated with the use of dentist-prescribed home use whiteners. Minor side effects from the procedures may include transient mild tooth sensitivity to temperature changes and mucosal irritation. Most side effects associated with the teeth whitening procedures disappear within one to seven days.

IS TEETH WHITENING FOR YOU?

Many patients have slight discolorations on their teeth due either to aging, discolorations from the natural build-up of organic pigments over time, trauma to the teeth, coffee, tea, smoking, or extended use of medications during the development of the teeth. There are a variety of procedures available today that allow just about anyone who wishes to brighten their smile, the opportunity to do so. Many people will lighten their teeth because it helps their self-esteem and gives people a little extra confidence and improve your first impression.

WHO SHOULD CAREFULLY REVIEW WHETHER BLEACHING IS A GOOD OPTION?

Patients who have sensitive teeth should consider using the milder solutions for bleaching, since the in-office techniques may cause additional sensitivity. In addition, patients who have very thin teeth may find that the bleaching techniques, while they may lighten the teeth, may show more of a grey translucency after the bleaching. Patients who have multiple crowns or white fillings on their front teeth should know that these types of restorations will not bleach with the materials available and as a result, they might need to consider the future costs of replacing crowns, doing veneers or replacing the white composite fillings in their front teeth.

HOW SOON WILL I SEE RESULTS AND WHAT KIND OF RESULTS CAN I EXPECT FROM THE TEETH WHITENING PROCEDURES?

Everyone responds differently in the length of time it takes to see results. This is why it is important for you to carefully discuss in advance with your dentist what the causes of the discolorations are. For most people, with the at-home bleaching techniques, you should see results within about four to seven days. For the in-office techniques, typically, results are seen within an hour. For people with intrinsic staining (from fluorosis, tetracycline staining or tooth trauma inside the pulp), the results may take longer and it may be necessary to have a few sessions, or discuss other options for the more intense stains. Typically these are the streaks or the purplish discolorations that are harder to lighten. Patients with intense streaks in their teeth will find that the intensity fades, however, it is almost impossible to totally remove the streaks, especially using only the home bleaching techniques.

HOW MUCH SHOULD I EXPECT TO PAY FOR THE PROCESS?

Prices vary depending upon the type of procedure that you and your doctor select to achieve the best result. It is fairly typical to see prices ranging from \$325 to \$850 depending upon the procedures that are best suited for you.

**AT HOME
CUSTOM TRAYS**

**LASER / POWER
BLEACHING**