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Tooth Bleaching

Whitening Your Smile

How we look and how we perceive ourselves has much to do with our self-esteem. When the colour of our teeth makes us embarrassed to smile, it's probably time to get our teeth whitened (bleached).

As one ages, teeth may darken from coffee, tea, smoking, berries and other substances that get into microcracks in the enamel, causing discolouration. Some people have gray or brown bands on their teeth caused by an early childhood fever or tetracycline medication taken when the tooth enamel was forming. In some parts of the country where fluoride is found in naturally high concentrations in the drinking water, individuals have developed teeth with bright white patches or dark brown blotches (mottled enamel or fluorosis).

Not everyone is a candidate for bleaching. Teeth discoloured from aging have the best results. If you have tooth-coloured resin or composite fillings in your front teeth, they will not change colour from bleaching. If you would like to have your teeth whitened, bring it to your dentist's attention at your next check-up visit. If you are not a good candidate, he or she can suggest alternatives such as bonding or porcelain veneers.

There are various options to whitening your teeth. Bleaching can be an in-office procedure (chairside).

There is also an at-home procedure wherein you will wear a custom-made mouthguard filled with a bleaching gel for two hours daily, or at night, for approximately two weeks.

Some toothpastes have added whitening agents and can be used as an adjunct to the other two procedures. In any case, there is no reason to ever again suffer the embarrassment of discoloured teeth.