

# A Clean Arrangement

Today's more advanced and varied tooth-whitening technologies give greater reason for smiles all around.

**N**o one really wants to frown their way through life. Unfortunately, smiling isn't always easy, especially when you know you don't have a set of perfectly pearly whites. But before you decide how to have your teeth whitened, it's best to understand what lies beneath the stains on them, so you can treat them better.

Extrinsic stains are those on the surface of teeth, and they can be removed easily with ordinary or whitening toothpastes, depending on their intensity. Professional cleaning procedures can remove more of those superficial stains, especially the ones caused by substances and chemicals such as coffee, red wine, cola, and nicotine from cigarettes.

If your teeth are still yellow after a morning's worth of brushing and a trip to the dentist, intrinsic stains might be the problem. "The colour of teeth is a reflection of the light from the tooth structure," explains Dr. James Lee, Dental Surgeon at The Dental Studio in Singapore, a subsidiary of the Singapore Medical Group. Thus, intrinsic stains are discolouration of structures within the teeth. This type of staining can occur when the tooth enamel has been eroded.

When it comes to clean, white, and healthy teeth, the enamel located on the tooth surface is the first and foremost protective layer. Although it's the hardest substance in the human body, this irreplaceable coating is susceptible to the tiniest of cracks and erosion caused by personal habits, tooth decay or age. Stains can penetrate damaged enamel and become embedded in the tooth. Furthermore, enamel erosion can expose the yellow or green tones of underlying dentine, and these can increase in intensity with age.







The types and intensity of tooth-whitening procedures depend on the cause of the stains. That's why over-the-counter tooth-whitening strips, bleaching kits and similar products from pharmacies or supermarkets, while convenient, have limited effect and may not fully address your needs.

"There are many whitening toothpastes on the market now. Some contain peroxide and some contain polishing particles. They work in different ways. Toothpastes containing peroxide release oxygen to bleach the stains, while polishing particles work as agents to remove stains on the tooth surface mechanically. They may work for some cases, but would not reach the same results provided by professional dentists," says Dr. Lee.

A visit to the dental clinic and discussion with a dental professional will help the patient identify the causes and types of stains he or she has, in order to formulate an ideal treatment plan for the best results. Today, professional tooth-whitening procedures can take the form of light-activated whitening (colloquially known as "laser" whitening), customised bleaching kits, and veneers for more-serious cases.

### **Light-Activated Tooth Whitening**

Light-activated tooth-whitening procedures can usually be categorised as in-office or take-home treatments. If the usual dental cleansing fails to brighten up yellowed teeth, light-activated tooth-whitening works especially well on both extrinsic and intrinsic stains. This in-office or chair-side procedure involves applying a bleaching agent, such as hydrogen peroxide, to the teeth and activating it with a special light. The light works with the gel to allow oxygen to penetrate

the teeth and to break up discolouration in them.

After a first visit to discuss whitening options with the dentist, chair-side whitening requires only a second visit lasting between an hour and 90 minutes to show immediate results. The longevity of the whiteness will depend a lot on the patient's lifestyle. With care, it can last from one to three years or even more.

Dental clinics stay abreast of the latest technologies and make their own choices from the light-whitening systems available. As Dr. Lee explains, they "work in tandem with their respective patented gels". One of the biggest brand names in tooth-whitening is Zoom! Chairside Whitening, widely known as the procedure used on the ABC network channel's hit reality programme *Extreme Makeover*. "In 2013, Zoom 3 for Whitening will be released, which is faster and more effective in whitening," informs Dr. Donny Kandarani, from the Dental Centre at BIMC Hospital in Nusa Dua, Bali, Indonesia. BriteSmile is another popular technology. It has less hydrogen peroxide in its gel than Zoom! The lamp of each whitening system works with its respective gel to accelerate the process.

### **Take-home Whitening Kits**

For those with more discipline and time, take-home whitening kits prescribed by a dentist are another option. While you can buy whitening kits at a pharmacy, prescribed bleaching trays are customised for the distinctive shape, size and position of each patient's individual teeth. An impression is taken to make the tray, which can require anything from an hour to up to a week to manufacture, depending on the clinic.

Patients can then conveniently whiten their teeth in their

# Make Up Tips For Whiter Teeth

## For the women out there...

Your make-up bag contains some easy styling smoke and mirror tricks for day-to-day camouflage. Red lipstick with blue undertones is particularly useful, as its cool hint of blue opposes warmer tones, like yellow teeth. Lip colours such as mauve and even light pink can make teeth look whiter. Avoid orange-based lipstick or gloss colours, such as peach tones; they will make stained teeth stand out.

Mid-face techniques involve getting the right skin tone. Bronzer creates a sharper contrast between skin tone and tooth colour, creating the illusion of whiter teeth. Sweep bronzer over the cheekbones, tip of the chin, and forehead. If you need to use blusher, stay away from warm-toned bronzers and choose pink.



## Throw out the gold

If you must have gold, yellow tones and fancy sparkles, leave the make-up and jewellery in those shades for the upper area of the face. Gold earrings and necklaces can highlight accompanying yellowish teeth. Let your wrists have some arm candy for the night instead.

## Make your eyes pop

The oldest trick in the book advises you to highlight only either the lips or eyes, as the competition for attention in between those two made-up features will be overwhelming. Along the same line of logic, deflect attention away from the teeth and prep those peepers with stunning eye-shadow colours, such as lavender or purple, for a night out.





home by filling the tray with bleaching gel and wearing it for one or two hours daily or overnight, as instructed. Instead of the hydrogen peroxide used in chair-side whitening, the bleaching agent in take-home kits is usually carbamide peroxide, which doesn't release so much of the whitening ingredients. Nevertheless, the results can be seen in a week or two and they last at least a year, depending on the patient's personal lifestyle.

### Side Effects

Temporary tooth sensitivity and gum irritation may occur after the whitening procedure, particularly when you consume hot or cold food and drinks. If you already have sensitive teeth, you should discuss your options with the dentist.

Bleaching gel can also cause chemical burns to soft tissues, such as the gums and lips, as the peroxide in the gel is actually strong enough to penetrate tooth enamel. That can happen if the bleaching tray does not fit perfectly, or if you overload it with gel.

Tooth-whitening's effects are never permanent. Teeth always become darker naturally with age and lifestyle habits. Touch-ups may be needed after a few years to maintain the


brightness of those new-found ivories.

Not everyone will benefit from tooth-whitening procedures. Tooth decay can cause discoloration that cannot be treated by tooth-whitening. If a tooth is dying, you must undergo root canal treatment before bleaching procedures become an option. "It is possible to whiten yellowed teeth stemming from genetic factors, but if it is due to the taking of antibiotics at a young age, whitening is only possible with the application of crowns," adds Dr. Kandarani. This is because the childhood intake of tetracycline antibiotics can extend the spectrum of tooth colour beyond yellow to horrific grey and purple tones.

If tooth-whitening by light-activated whitening and bleaching kits fails to do the trick, crowns and veneers can be alternative solutions for a sparkling set of front teeth. Check out the stories about crowns on page 73 and veneers on page 78.

With so many effective tooth-whitening treatments available now, you'll be smiling proudly and confidently at the receptionist as you walk out from the dental clinic into the world.

 [Smg.sg](http://Smg.sg)

 [Bimcbali.com](http://Bimcbali.com)

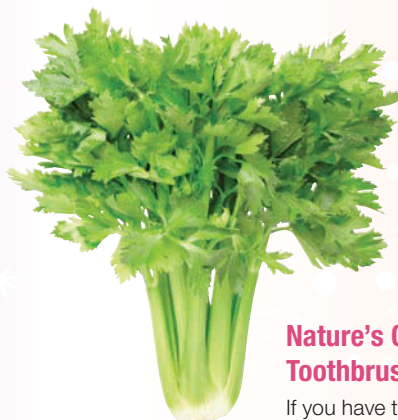
# Tips for Teeth

Many culprits are responsible for stained and yellow teeth, including coffee, tea, red wine, cola, curries, and even blueberries. In fact, anything that can stain your white cotton shirt is probably going to stain your teeth. Yet that doesn't mean you have to abstain from your morning cuppa. Here are some tips to help preserve your dazzling whites.



## Eating Habits

Drink with a straw more often, so as not to stain the front of your teeth when you imbibe dark beverages like cola and coffee. Although they will still stain the back of your teeth over time, the straw will also prevent the sugar they contain from being deposited all around your teeth, which can lead to tooth decay. At the very least, remember to rinse your mouth with water after every meal. Acidic drinks such as that lunchtime soda can erode tooth surfaces over time and make them more prone to stains, or damage their enamel to expose the darker dentine underneath.



## Nature's Own Toothbrushes

If you have to have a go at your teeth in an *au naturel* fashion, crunchy fruits and vegetables – such as apples, pears, carrots and celery – are high in cellulose and can act as a natural abrasive scrub. Chomping on them also stimulates saliva production and prevents plaque from forming. However, saliva carries bacteria, so don't ditch your toothbrush.

## Dentistry over DIY

Online videos and your grandmother may tout the benefits of lemon juice, baking soda, vinegar, or a nasty combination of two or all. Although these are cheap alternatives, they can do more harm than good in the long run. Such substances can corrode the enamel and show up the underlying darker dentine.



## Brush Well and Floss

That might sound like common sense, but how many times have you woken up bleary-eyed, then stuck a toothbrush in your mouth to go through the motions perfunctorily while your eyes are still firmly closed? Our tooth surfaces aren't flat, and the bristles should ideally be at a 45-degree angle while you brush your front teeth in small circles. Wipe the Sandman's dust off around your eyes and look into the mirror while you brush to see whether your motions miss anywhere. Flossing is also imperative, because a toothbrush can't reach certain nooks and crannies in our mouths. Dental plaque can make teeth look yellow, as some bacteria we consume contain pigments that can coat your teeth with an unwanted tinge of colour.

GHT



# Tools For Teeth

While dental health is paramount, some products are specifically designed to gift a gleaming set of molars as an added benefit. Enhance your bathroom routine with them and your smile will soon be glinting in the mirror's reflection.

## Crest 3D White Whitestrips Professional Effects

This popular product hits the button with busy career climbers who are hastening to brighten up their smile for impending events. Leave these strips on your teeth for only 30 minutes each day for a whiter smile in just three days, and full results in 20. They contain only a 10-percent concentration of hydrogen peroxide, compared to the 30 to 35-percent of in-office procedures. Even so, they can still remove both extrinsic and intrinsic stains by working beneath the enamel.

3dwhite.com



## Oral-B Professional Care SmartSeries 5000 with SmartGuide

Apart from its promise to remove 99.7 percent of plaque in hard-to-reach areas of the mouth, this electric toothbrush ranks high in the charts when it comes to whitening and polishing. Five modes make up the comprehensive oral care it provides: daily clean, sensitive, whitening, deep clean, and even massage.

Oralb.com



## Rembrandt Intense Stain Toothpaste

As its name suggests, this toothpaste is specially formulated to fight stubborn stains, including those from tobacco. But what makes it a wonder in a tube is the tetrapotassium pyrophosphate, which prevents further tooth-staining.

Rembrandt.com



### Emmi-dent Ortho Toothbrush

Brushing around the wires and brackets of dental braces is not very effective when trying to keep your teeth clean and white. Thankfully, Emmi-dent has come up with a specially designed brush head for its ultrasonic toothbrush line. The middle row of shorter bristles helps to clean the wire of the braces while other bristles are arranged so that they are positioned close to the brackets for optimal cleaning.

[Emmi-dent.com](http://Emmi-dent.com)

### Emmi-dent Ultrasonic Toothbrush and Emmi-dent Nano-bubbles Toothpaste

The world's first ultrasonic toothbrush uses new and patented ultrasound technology to kill bacteria in the mouth. Thus this motionless toothbrush technology can clean teeth even without brushing. The non-abrasive approach helps to protect both tooth enamel and gums. The revolutionary product was even awarded the "Innovation" prize in the Prevention-Hygiene category at the 2011 Pragodont International Dental Fair. While regular toothpastes have "scrubbing" particles that may not be able to reach into small crevices and under the gum line, Emmi-dent's accompanying Nano-bubbles toothpaste creates millions of micro bubbles which work in tandem with the ultrasonic impulse to thoroughly destroy plaque, tartar and stains.



### Philips Sonicare HX 6732/02 HealthyWhite R732 Rechargeable Electric Toothbrush

With its ability to remove coffee, tea, and red wine stains, the "clean and white" setting on this nifty gadget will ensure your teeth maintain a lasting sparkle. Two other modes, "clean" and "sensitive", also use patented sonic technology. Philips Sonicare is known for the longevity of its products, so it will be on your bathroom shelf for a long time.

[Philips.com](http://Philips.com)