



Children's Oral Health Program

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Brightening and Whiter

Who doesn't want a whiter smile? Modern bleaching of teeth. In ancient times, urine was used. We've come a long way from those days. Today, as an in-office treatment, home use treatments in the office, or can be purchased over-the-counter at home, appears to be a safe way to enhance our smiles.

Teeth can be easily stained by tobacco, tea, coffee, and other foods. Stains of stain are known as extrinsic stain and can be removed using an ADA accepted toothpaste, with a fine abrasive. As a result of systemic conditions, the use of medication (tetracycline), childhood disease, an infection of the tooth and natural aging changes.

Tooth whitening is typically accomplished with hydrogen peroxide or carbamide peroxide, which work in a similar manner. The peroxide diffuses through the tooth and oxidizes stain molecules, making them invisible.

Professional bleaching is a dentist supervised procedure.

- In-office bleaching
- Dentist prescribed home bleaching

The in-office bleaching is a procedure performed with a rubber shield is placed near the gums to protect the gums from the bleaching agent. A peroxide bleaching agent is applied to a light or laser usually over the course of 1-2 sessions. A session is approximately 30 - 60 minutes in length. Today's products are mostly hydrogen peroxide-based in-office while the home use products typically use carbamide peroxide in the 10% to 35% range.



Home bleaching is prescribed by the dentist in the dental office. A custom tray is made for the patient, which holds the bleaching agent. The dentist applies the peroxide bleach to the tray and the patient wears it for an hour every day or overnight for a week.

Over-the-counter (OTC) bleaching products use carbamide peroxide as the main ingredient. The concentration is lower than in-office products, so it may take a longer amount of time. Some of the OTC products include whitening toothpaste, trays, and whitening rinses.

Adverse reactions of bleaching may be tooth sensitivity, which may be decreased through the use of potassium nitrate, fluoride or ACP (amorphous calcium phosphate) to make the effect more manageable. The twice daily use