

## Tooth Whitening

Teeth become darker because of the foods we eat or drink and also with age. Sometimes medications taken as a child or trauma to a tooth can affect the tooth color. It is wise to have a dental exam by a dentist to see if you are a candidate for whitening before starting any whitening procedure.

There are many options for whitening your teeth. Over the counter options such as toothpastes work by using abrasives to polish the external surfaces of the tooth. Mouthwashes that contain whitening agents will unlikely provide any visible whitening to the teeth and may burn the gum tissue. They should be used with caution. Also be cautious with activated charcoal, coconut oil, strawberry paste, lemon juice mixes to whiten. These agents will not give much result, but they can irreversibly strip the enamel on your teeth and potentially cause sensitivity. They are very abrasive and are not approved by the American Dental Association. Whitening strips and OTC take home kits also work on the external surfaces with lower concentrations of whitening agents offered in the dental office.

The safest whitening option is a take home tray system with the ideal concentration of whitening agent dispensed by a dentist or an in office bleaching performed by a dentist. These are both offered here in our clinic. First, a dentist will examine your teeth to ensure you are a good candidate for the whitening process then the take home whitening kit is dispensed. When worn as directed it is safe with minimal side effects and good results.