



Health Yourself Byte

ARE OVER-THE-COUNTER (OTC) TEETH WHITENING PRODUCTS SAFE?

OTC teeth whitening products are safe and effective on healthy teeth when used as directed. “Teeth whitening” is any process that makes teeth whiter either by lightening teeth or by removing stains and discoloration from teeth. There are actually two (2) types of products available:



1. All toothpastes contain mild abrasives that help remove surface stains, but **“WHITENING TOOTHPASTES”** contain a gentle chemical or polishing agent that provides additional stain removal properties. These products contain no bleach.
2. **PEROXIDE-BASED WHITENERS or BLEACHING AGENTS** actually change the natural tooth color by helping to remove deep and surface stains. The OTC products contain a lower strength bleaching agent than the agents used in your dentist’s office. For this reason, they must be used longer to achieve the desired results . . . but, they’re also cheaper!

There are few side effects that are usually temporary, like sensitive teeth and gum irritation.

No matter which product you use, whitening isn’t permanent and results can vary depending on your current and desired tooth color, food and beverages you consume and how well you take care of your teeth.

Teeth whitening product are NOT recommended for:

1. Pregnant women or women who are breast-feeding
2. Children younger than 16
3. Individuals with sensitive or peroxide allergy
4. People with gum disease or worn tooth enamel.

When choosing an OTC whitener, look for products with the American Dental Association Seal of Acceptance and consult your dentist before using a teeth whitening product.



The Medical
Center of Plano