



## **FAQs about Teeth Whitening**

### **Q. What causes tooth discoloration?**

A. There are many causes of tooth discoloration. Some of the most common include aging and heavily pigmented food and beverages. More serious causes are excessive fluoride or tetracycline (antibiotic) consumption.

### **Q. How does teeth whitening work?**

A. The active ingredient in the teeth whitening gel is hydrogen peroxide or carbamide peroxide. The peroxide enters the tooth and safely removes stains by bleaching the enamel and dentin.

### **Q. Who should NOT undergo teeth whitening?**

A. Any of the following:

- Pregnant or lactating women
- People with poor enamel or decalcification caused by excessive use of fluorides.
- People with periodontal disease including gingivitis or gums in poor condition
- People who wear braces
- People who recently had oral surgery
- People with decaying teeth or exposed roots
- People with open cavities
- People with a history of allergic reactions to peroxide products
- People under the age of 14

### **Q. Who may benefit from tooth whitening?**

A. Almost everyone. However, there are some cases where treatment may not be effective. Tetracycline (antibiotic) discolorations and artificial dental work are usually not greatly responsive to dental bleaching.

### **Q. Will teeth whitening work on crowns, veneers and other artificial dental work?**

No. Teeth whitening will not work on crowns, veneers or composite fillings. The gel will only whiten natural teeth.

### **Q. Are there any side effects?**

A. The most common side effects from tooth whitening are tooth sensitivity and gum irritation. These symptoms are temporary and should disappear after the whitening treatment.

### **Q. Is teeth whitening safe?**

A. Yes. Decades of research have proven bleaching to be both safe and effective.

### **Q. How long does the whitening last?**

A. This depends on the person's habits and the porosity of the teeth. The results will normally last for 6 months to 2 year. Touch-ups are recommended every 3-6 months, though.