

Common Causes of Teeth Discoloration

Although we think of teeth as being “pearly white,” normal healthy teeth actually can be varying shades of off-white and pale yellow. Genetics play a strong factor in the natural color of our teeth, as some individuals may naturally have white teeth, while others may never have had white teeth.

But when teeth become visibly stained or discolored, a variety of reasons can be to blame. As we grow older, it’s natural for the enamel layer of our teeth to thin and become stained, and certain foods (berries, coffee, black tea, brown sodas, red wine) and smoking can accelerate the problem. Also, illness and certain medications can affect tooth color. Over-fluoridation in our developmental stages can also cause teeth to become spotted.

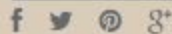
Treatment Options

Mild teeth stains may be easily remedied with a whitening toothpaste and a good home care program, such as regular brushing with a whitening toothpaste, daily flossing and rinsing. Some discolorations can be removed with a simple office cleaning, but for more difficult stains, or stains that haven’t been treated over a long period, a bleaching agent, such as a whitening gel, can be effective. When the enamel layer is damaged or worn away or the inner dentin layer is discolored, veneers are an option.

While stains and discoloration caused by external factors like food or drink are more easily whitened, discoloration from internal factors are more difficult, and results vary, depending on individual factors.

While we all desire white teeth, whitening products may not be suitable for everyone. Whitening products can irritate sensitive gums. Also, whitening agents do not work on teeth with porcelain fillings. Any tooth decay or gum diseases should be treated before any whitening procedures are done.

Once your teeth are whitened, they are more easily stained, so any external stain-causing factors like red wine or tobacco will need to be avoided to retain the brightest smile. If you’ve tried home teeth whitening products with no success, your dentist will be able to recommend an approach that’s right for your situation, so you’ll have a smile to be proud of.



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