

# Understanding Teeth Whitening\*

What You Need To Know Before  
You Whiten Your Teeth



Compare The 6 Most Common  
Options From Toothpaste  
To Light Activated Whitening

### What Options Are Available?

Let's face it,—first impressions are very important. Your smile plays a huge part in the impression you make. In fact, research into human behavior reveals that we judge the physical, mental and emotional reserves of a person based on our instinctual first impressions. A radiant smile automatically registers feelings of trust.

To help our patients understand how whitening products work, we have put together a comprehensive look at the choices.

The following is a compilation of our professional opinions and may differ from the opinions of the product manufacturers.



# WHITENING TOOTHPASTES

## The Same Old Toothpaste In A Fancy New Box?

First, let's look at whitening toothpaste. When examining most toothpaste's lists of ingredients, you will find that there is little difference. You would think that if you bought a product labeled as a whitening toothpaste, the active ingredient would be a tooth-whitening chemical. Yet even in more costly toothpastes, often the only ingredient listed as active is the fluoride compound, which has nothing to do with whitening teeth. Everything else is listed as inactive ingredients. Many toothpastes with whitening claims on the box are no different than before. They are just in a new box.

So what is added to toothpaste that whitens? Some manufacturers add the ingredient silica, silicon dioxide or hydrated silica (all made from sand). Other toothpaste manufacturers use the abrasives, calcium carbonate made from limestone and alumina or aluminum oxide made from bauxite. These common abrasives have been around for years, however, the science shows these abrasives can be damaging as they can slowly wear away your tooth enamel and any exposed root structure and can cause sensitivity.

A newer whitening ingredient frequently used is a type of sodium phosphate. It works by removing the protein coating that the saliva naturally places on your teeth. Most food stains do not initially stick to the tooth but stick to this protein coating. So you brush stains away by using sodium phosphate to remove the stained protein coating, the protein coating reforms on the tooth in just a few hours and so no damage is done to the tooth.

There is no doubt that keeping food stains off of your teeth helps keep your teeth white. **However, toothpastes are not making your teeth any whiter than a hygienist will by polishing your teeth during your regular professional cleaning appointment.**



# OVER-THE-COUNTER WHITENING SYSTEMS

## Whitening Toothpastes with Peroxide

Over-the-counter whitening “systems” are basically toothpastes with a small amount of peroxide and possibly a weak acid like phosphoric, acetic, or citric acid. Long-term exposure to these acids dissolves little bits of enamel from your teeth. The concentration of peroxide in these products is only about 1 to 3%.

## Paint-On Whitening Gels

There are many different over-the-counter choices with gels. Whitening gels will whiten teeth a couple of shades.

However, gels only work to whiten when in contact with the tooth surface. They work better than strips for crooked teeth or between teeth however, patients find them hard to administer since saliva, food or drinks wash the product off the tooth surface. You must let the gel dry on the tooth to be effective, which is very difficult.

The other concern for most people is that paint-on gels will typically only whiten the front teeth on top and bottom because it is difficult to paint and dry the back teeth. Gels are typically selected because of the low cost, but the results are quite limited. Caution is also recommended as gum irritation can occur if application is not exact.

## Teeth Whitening Strips

Strips you buy over-the-counter can be effective but do not provide comparable results to dentist administered whitening. Again, because whitening only occurs where the whiten strip is in contact with the tooth surface, the strips do not work as well for crooked teeth or between teeth.



# DENTIST ADMINISTERED WHITENING TRAY SYSTEMS

## How Whitening Tray Systems Work

In the mid 1980's carbamide peroxide, which had been used for years to treat minor gum irritations, was found to whiten teeth. Carbamide Peroxide is the product an estimated 99% of dentists use today to whiten teeth when using a tray system.

To make a custom tray we will make an impression of your teeth to create a model of your teeth. With special equipment, we will mold a plastic sheet over your models. You now have a custom made tray just for your teeth.

You apply the supplied whitening gel to the inside of your custom trays and wear the trays either at night while you sleep, or for a specific amount of time during the day. For those who stay committed to completion of this process, most will see a significant difference in the color of their teeth in about two weeks. Most people get excellent results from custom tray whitening system.



Custom whitening trays made from molded impressions

## 30 TO 60 MINUTE IN-OFFICE WHITENING

### **If You Are Looking For Same Day Results**

The fastest type of whitening is concentrated in-office whitening. The main whitening agent in this product is hydrogen peroxide, which has been used for over 29 years to safely whiten teeth. Unlike the 1 to 3% solution used in over-the-counter hydrogen peroxide products, this procedure uses up to 50% solution. A activating light source is applied to speed up the process.

The whitening gel this strong can be irritating to the soft tissues near and around your teeth. It's important to protect the gums, cheek, lips, and tongue. This is done by covering and protecting these areas with special waxes and gels. Even with these precautions you may still experience some irritation from the whiten gel. Vitamin E can be applied to any irritated area following the whitening treatment.

### **How the In-Of- fice Whitening Process works**

At Sandstone Dental we use the Spa-Dent! In-Office whitening system. In most cases can be accomplished in one, 30-60 minute session. Some in-office whitening patients feel they need a second round of whitening or follow up with custom take home trays.

The Spa-Dent system uses a activating light system as the energy source to activate the hydrogen peroxide to allow it to whiten faster.

### **All Of Our Procedures Are Customized To YOUR Situation**

At Sandstone Dental our whitening procedures use the most up to date systems available. Our whitening plans are custom tailored to each of our patient's needs and goals. During your complete in office whitening process a hygienist or a registered dental assistant will be monitoring your progress to assure you remain comfortable and achieve the best result possible.

# PREPARING FOR YOUR WHITENING TREATMENT AT SANDSTONE DENTAL

Our goal is to help you understand the whitening process, answer any questions you may have, help you feel comfortable with whichever whitening system you have chosen.

If your teeth have not been professionally cleaned recently, we recommend that you first make an appointment for a professional cleaning with one of our hygienists, to remove any tartar buildup as your teeth will not whiten under the tartar. We also suggest a complete examination and x-rays of your teeth if you have not had regular dental care within the last 12 months. An exam and current x-rays are important to ensure there are no cavities before you start whitening, because adding whitening gel to a cavity can cause sensitivity.



### So, How White Can You Make My Teeth?

When considering whitening one often wonders what my results will look like. We can show you examples of results we have achieved with our patients. Our top priority is to be certain that you are very happy with your results. While results vary from person to person, everyone can benefit from this procedure. The goal of whitening is to brighten your smile as quickly, easily, and cost effectively as possible. The next page is an explanation of why your results may vary.





# UNDERSTANDING TEETH WHITENING COLOR

## The Results You Can Expect

Potential results will depend on your teeth - everyone's teeth are different. If your teeth are heavily stained from coffee or smoking, you will probably see a big change. If your teeth are not heavily stained, the change may not be as great. Before your whitening starts we will confirm the current colour of your teeth using a shade guide. We will use this guide to measure the colour change that takes place.

If your teeth are moderately dark, you may require two in office session or more that 2 weeks of custom tray home whitening, to get the teeth as white as you want them. Very dark teeth especially gray colours and tetracycline antibiotic stained teeth may require three to four in-office sessions followed by multiple weeks of custom tray home whitening. The darker the teeth are before they are bleached, the more chance that the teeth will have some colour variation remaining.

Generally, teeth can be whitened from 3 to 8 shades by professional whitening, and sometimes more.



## TEETH WHITENING OPTION CHART

Method	COST	LENGTH OF TREATMENT	EXPECTED RESULTS
Whitening Toothpaste	\$3 to \$15	Continuously	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very limited little or no whitening.</li> <li>• May prevent tartar buildup</li> <li>• Some may actually cause tooth and gum sensitivity and damage if used over long periods.</li> </ul>
Paint On Gels	\$5 to \$15	6 to 8 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slight whitening expected - difficult to administer (saliva washes off product).</li> <li>• Caution suggested as gum irritation can occur if application is not exact.</li> </ul>
Over-The-Counter Tape Strips	\$50 to \$75	6 to 8 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not work well for crooked teeth.</li> <li>• Will not whiten between teeth. Only for front teeth on top and bottom.</li> </ul>
Custom Home Whitening Trays	\$300	Up to 2 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trays fit tightly around your teeth allowing for even distribution of whitening gel.</li> <li>• Can customize whiten gel strength.</li> <li>• Initially may experience temporary sensitivity to cold liquids.</li> </ul>
Spa-Dent In-Office Whitening	\$500	Usually 30 to 60 min plus home tray followup.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May take 2 sittings for severe staining.</li> <li>• Whitens teeth very well, often several shades.</li> <li>• May cause temporary irritation of gums, which is usually resolved by Vitamin E application.</li> <li>• Initially may experience temporary sensitivity to cold liquids.</li> </ul>



## Long Term Results

While whitening results are long lasting, you may wish to consider a whitening touch up every few years. We can supply you with an at home touch-up kit to refresh your whitening result. Many people would like to have changes in addition to just whitening, like straighter teeth, spaces or gaps between their teeth closed or more uniform and ideally proportional teeth to fit your smile. Invisalign, Veneers, Crowns and other cosmetic solutions may be a viable choice for these concerns and give you the smile you desire. At Sandstone Dental we will give you the information you need to make the best choice for you.

## What To Do Now...

Call Sandstone Dental to schedule a consultation with one of team members to evaluate your situation and let you know what to expect.

If you are considering teeth whitening  
Call Sandstone Dental at:

**403 275 3132**

or go to:

**[www.sandstonedental.ca](http://www.sandstonedental.ca)**



Dr. Ashish Oommen



Dr. Peter Manzer



Dr. Rod Tajziehchi

## HOURS

<b>Monday</b>	7:30 am to 5:00 pm
<b>Tuesday</b>	7:30 am to 8:00 pm
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<b>Thursday</b>	7:30 am to 8:00 pm
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