

How to Whiten Teeth Naturally

By TJ Sacks & Associates

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Naturally whiten your teeth by changing your diet.

If coffee, cigarettes and food have left their mark on your teeth, you're not alone. There are plenty of people who would try anything to get back their pearly whites.

"Teeth naturally yellow for a number of reasons including smoking, eating highly pigmented foods, drinking coffee, tea or red wine, treatment with antibiotics, trauma, and too much fluoride and tartar accumulation," according to Elisa Mello, DDS, from NYC Smile Design, a New York-based cosmetic and restorative dental practice. But did you know that Mother Nature has some natural solutions to getting back your pearly whites? Here are some tips provided by Dr. Mello:

Dos

- Eat foods that act like detergents and whiten teeth naturally. To keep teeth bright and prevent yellowing, you need to remove the staining bacteria by chewing certain crunchy fruits and vegetables that produce high salivary flow and actually work like tiny toothbrushes to help scrub away stubborn stains over time. So, take a bite out of apples, carrots, pears, guavas, cauliflower and cucumbers.
- Eat lots of dark green vegetables. Vegetables like broccoli, lettuce and spinach act like a barrier on teeth by creating a film that prevents stains from recurring and can actually help scrub away stubborn stains over time.
- Eat lots of high-fiber and whole foods—they act as natural tooth cleansers.
- Mash a few strawberries in a bowl and then take your finger and spread the pulp all over your teeth. Leave it on a minute or two, and then thoroughly rinse and brush it off.
- Sip through a straw to protect your teeth from stain-makers like coffee, tea, red wine and cola.
- Drink plenty of water to keep the teeth hydrated.

Don'ts

- The rule of thumb is that anything that can stain a white T-shirt can stain your teeth too. That means most varieties of berries, as well as soy sauce, red wine, many fruit juices, coffee, tea, and cola. You don't have to avoid them altogether, but immediately after indulging, rinse out your mouth with water, brush your teeth or chew gum.
- Keep in mind that citrus fruits contain acid that can cause enamel to deteriorate over time.
- Be aware that those sports drinks, energy drinks and fitness waters contain organic acids which are known to break down calcium. So they're especially good at eroding your teeth. Recent studies show they were more damaging to tooth enamel than cola-based drinks.
- Reduce your intake of acidic foods like vinegar. Foods that are slightly acidic open up the pores of the tooth enamel allowing for easy staining.
- Avoid highly processed sugars and high-fructose corn syrup, especially sticky foods that maintain contact with the teeth for a longer period of time.
- Extremely hot or cold liquids are dangerous to your white smile because they change the temperature of your teeth. This temperature change causes teeth to expand and contract, allowing stains to penetrate your teeth.
- Tobacco is the biggest culprit in quickly staining your white teeth.

"Thorough cleaning by a dentist or hygienist will remove most external staining from teeth caused by food and tobacco. Using a whitening toothpaste can also help remove these surface stains between dental visits.

If stains have been present for years, you may need to have your teeth professionally whitened to remove these more stubborn external stains,” notes Dr. Mello, a Clinical Assistant Professor at NYU College of Dentistry.

“Teeth with internal stains caused by the aging process, antibiotics and trauma can be bleached, veneered or crowned. While each of these methods is safe and effective, your dentist will recommend which treatment is appropriate for you depending on the state of your teeth and the results that you wish to achieve,” adds Dr. Mello.

For more information please go to www.nycsmiledesign.com

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