



# White teeth

– the secret to a younger-looking smile

From at-home kits to clinical whitening, we look at the latest ways to brighten your smile

**B**right, white smiles not only look good, they make you look younger. 'The reason white teeth instantly make you look younger is they help hide the fact those teeth have been around a long time,' explains celebrity dentist Uchenna Okoye.

Apart from natural wear and tear, the main reason teeth get stained is down to our food and drink. 'Your teeth have things called dentine tubules, which are like open pores in your skin,' explains Uchenna. 'Over time, colour molecules from food get lodged into the "pores" and block them so they appear darker. The main culprits are tea, coffee, red

wine and smoking, but really anything that will stain a white shirt will stain your teeth.' Thank goodness, then, there are as many cures as there are causes...

## HOW WHITENING WORKS

Almost all whitening is based on a hydrogen peroxide solution. The main difference in the many systems out there is the concentration and the way the solution is applied to teeth. Think of whitening as a bit like a facial – it helps to unblock the pores in your tooth so stains are gently removed leaving teeth cleaner and brighter. And, as with a facial, it's wise to ask the experts which is best for you.

## PROFESSIONAL WHITENING

Not surprisingly, the most potent whitening is only available in dental surgeries – so-called chairside treatments where a more concentrated gel is applied to your teeth. To speed up the process, heat (power whitening) or light (laser whitening) is applied through a special device. Zoom2! Laser Whitening has been one of the most popular systems for years, but now top cosmetic dentists such as Dr Joe Oliver are adding to the treatment for even better results. His power whitening (£545, [www.thewelbeckclinic.co.uk](http://www.thewelbeckclinic.co.uk), 020 7486 8100) involves tailor-made trays, filled with gel bleach each day and worn at home for four hours at a time, for at least four days. Our tester's teeth were noticeably whiter. Then she had Zoom2!, which takes just over an hour and involves a higher concentration of gel, activated with a high-intensity light. Despite the mouth-stretching device it can be quite relaxing. After a couple of days of 'white' food and drink, you're ready for your close-up!

## BANISH DISCOLOURATION

If you were born between 1965 and 1975, you may have antibiotic staining which makes teeth look yellow/brown or grey/blue. At that time, doctors often prescribed the antibiotic tetracycline, which can cause the deep discoloration. 'Unlike surface staining, antibiotic discoloration lies deep within the tooth,' explains top dentist Simon Darfoor (Darfoor Dental Practice, 020 7580 2294). Dr Darfoor is achieving amazing results using whitening trays with a 16 per cent peroxide gel, plus a Zoom2! Session (£550). Our tester found her blue/grey staining all but disappeared. Also good for very stained teeth is the KoR Deep Whitening treatment. As well as the trays, there is an hour's conditioning treatment for teeth and gums to help the whitening solution work better. Then the trays are worn every night for two weeks followed by 90 minutes of laser treatment. Our tester said even though the trays could be slightly uncomfortable, after one night she saw a big difference, and by the end, her teeth were sparkling white (from £845, [www.ultrasmile.co.uk](http://www.ultrasmile.co.uk) or call 020 7093 4488).