

Teeth Whitening: Dentist vs. At-Home Treatments

## Teeth Whitening: Going to the Dentist vs. DIY

Jaime Richards / AUGUST 8, 2011 3:05 AM / [Read More: Teeth, Teeth Whitening, Dr Arthur Glosman](#)

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"Bleaching [your teeth] is probably one of the most significant changes that you can make," says Beverly Hills-based general and cosmetic dentist Dr. Arthur Glosman. "But whenever you're going to do any type of teeth whitening, it's always best to get some kind of consultation with your dentist first." However, what are the advantages of having your dentist do it as compared to doing it yourself? While both techniques can indeed work and have their advantages, see some reasons you might get better, longer-lasting results from a professional treatment when you read more.

### What at-home bleaching *cannot* do:

Bleaching will not get teeth that are dark-stained white, such as those affected by tetracycline antibiotics. This also includes teeth with cavities on them, or dental bondings that are experiencing leaks and therefore are more apt to decay or stain from coffee, tea, or smoking. "It's always important to get that kind of general checkup with the dentist to make sure what you are bleaching is natural tooth structure," Dr. Glosman explains. "Once you know that you're bleaching your natural teeth, then it's off to the races."

### Powerful stuff:

For the consumer, teeth whitening products range from strips to chewing gums to everything in between, using anywhere from around three to 10 percent hydrogen peroxide to lighten the teeth. In the dentist's office, that range is higher: around 15 to 38 percent hydrogen peroxide. "The reason we do that [have less percentage in at-home products] is because we don't have control over how long people use it, so it's kept at a safe concentration," says Dr. Glosman. At the dentist's office, however, where the percentage is higher, the treatment is done in a more controlled environment, taking special care to protect the gums with a barrier to prevent irritation.

### The time factor:

Because of the strength of the product and technique used at the dentist, the bleaching time is cut significantly; down to about an hour. "If you do it in the office, I would say your teeth will stay white for a good six months," says Dr. Glosman. To maintain, use take-home trays as needed to give a boost when the color fades a bit.

### But be realistic:

No matter where you whiten your smile, your teeth will not remain white forever, even after the most powerful of treatments. It's also important not to go overboard in attempt to keep them constantly white. "I don't recommend too much of anything," Dr. Glosman advises. "Too much whitening turns the teeth kind of like a bluish color where it's really translucent — or it could be really chalky. So, everything has to be used with that thought in mind of safety."

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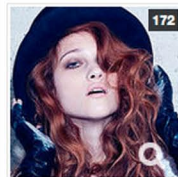
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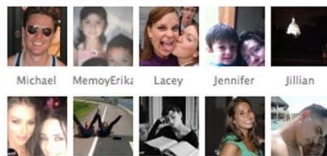


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