



# Something To Smile About

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## Teeth Whitening

The summer may be over, your tan fading, but your bright smile can go on and on. Teeth whitening is nothing new, but the advances in it certainly are.

There are many ways to brighten your smile, from toothpastes to in-office procedures. It's simply a matter of finding what works for you.

Improving your smile is as easy as brushing your teeth when you use over-the-counter whitening toothpaste. And



while many ADA-approved brands of toothpastes do help remove surface stains using mild abrasives, special chemicals and polishing agents, they do not change the actual color of the teeth.

Other, more advanced, at-home treatments exist in easy-to-use tools such as Crest White Strips, Rembrandt

Two-Hour whitening gel and GoSmile ampoules. These methods may work for some but the strength of the materials must remain lower than the prescription-strength products, only available through a dental office.

Crest White Strips exist in many different varieties, but all are thin gel-coated strips that come cut to fit across rows of teeth. They come foil-packed and are worn for 30 minutes twice a day for ten days, using Premium Plus, may produce results lasting up to 18 months. Other varieties include Premium, which are worn for seven days and offer 12 months worth of results, and Original, which bring year-long results in 14 days. The limitation to this method is that the gel is not prescription strength and the strips only cover the front teeth, and many people show teeth further back when they smile.

Rembrandt 2-Hour White consists of upper and lower ComfyTray mouthguards that are filled with a bleaching gel and worn for 20 minutes. They are then removed for ten minutes and replaced for 20 more minutes. This process is repeated continuously for two hours to completion.

GoSmile Advanced Formula B-1 Tooth Whitening On-The-Go is another gel, but this formula comes in a vacuum-sealed ampoule with a brush applicator for custom application. Applying this should take two to three minutes concentrating on each tooth for five to ten seconds. (Once application is complete, eating and drinking

are to be avoided for 20 minutes, but there is no rinsing involved. The gel evaporates off of teeth once the oxidation process is complete).

For the most up-to-date and powerful whitening systems, you must visit a dental office. Because of the strength of the prescription whitening products, these methods are only available through a dentist. Popular methods used today include chairside bleaching procedures, where the dentist applies a protective gel or a rubber shield to your gums to protect oral tissues. Next, a bleaching agent is applied to the teeth. In some cases, a special light may be used to intensify the agent. Some procedures may require multiple visits to the dentist's office for results. Custom-made trays can also be made for patients to use at home for touch-ups and further bleaching.



At our office, we proudly feature the Zoom! 2<sup>®</sup> laser teeth whitening system. Zoom! 2<sup>®</sup> is the latest in teeth whitening technology and can produce brilliant results. It is a light-activated teeth whitening system that is capable of whitening teeth up to 8 shades in just one hour. Each patient is given a thorough examination prior to treatment to determine if the patient's teeth and gums are healthy enough to undergo bleaching. After the examination, a hydrogen peroxide gel is applied to the teeth. A low-heat Zoom! 2<sup>®</sup> laser shines on the teeth and activates the hydrogen, which allows the oxygen to penetrate the teeth and bleach the enamel. The bleaching process is followed by a five-minute fluoride treatment. In about an hour, the patient has a new glowing smile.

It should also be noted that (to my knowledge and experience) the ADA has not released any statement claiming that whitening products are harmful to the patient's teeth.



With any tooth whitening system, the most common side effects are a transient sensitivity to hot and cold. This generally is mild and can last up to a few days after the treatment is done. As a preventative measure, a fluoride gel or paste may be prescribed prior to and after your treatment to lessen this.

Regardless of which whitening technique works for you, white teeth are in. And that's a trend on which you don't want to miss out! ☺

*Photos in this article are of actual patients of Dr. Lichorwic.*

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