All About Teeth Whitening in Melbourne | Core Dental

Canonical: https://www.coredental.com.au/all-about-teeth-whitening/

Details:

Teeth whitening is a dental treatment that lightens the colour of your teeth. At Core Dental we offer in-chair Zoom whitening, take-home whitening kits or a combination of both. Teeth lose their natural colour over time because of foods and drinks such as red wine, coffee and tea, as well as smoking, some medications and ageing. Whether whitening suits you depends on a dental examination, and results vary from person to person.

What causes teeth to discolour?

Many everyday habits can change the colour of your teeth. Red wine, coffee, tea, berries, chocolate and lollies can all stain teeth over time. Smoking is a significant contributor, and some prescription medications and antibiotics can also cause discolouration. Teeth naturally darken and become more opaque with age as well. It is no surprise that whiter teeth are a popular request, particularly before an important event such as a wedding or another milestone celebration.

What are the two types of tooth discolouration?

Dentists describe discolouration as extrinsic or intrinsic.

Extrinsic discolouration is staining on the outer surface of the enamel. It is commonly linked to age, diet and oral hygiene.

Intrinsic discolouration affects the inner structure of the tooth. It often results from trauma or internal bleeding in the tooth, and some medications can contribute.

The type of discolouration matters because it influences which whitening approach, if any, is likely to help. Your dentist can assess this when they examine you.

Which whitening options can you choose from?

There are many products on offer, including home remedies, whitening toothpastes, over-the-counter kits and dentist-supervised treatment, and they vary in how well they work. At Core Dental you can choose from:

In-chair Zoom whitening, completed at the practice in a single session

Customised take-home whitening kits

A combination of in-chair and take-home whitening

How does in-chair Zoom whitening work?

In-chair whitening is carried out at one of our clinics and is tailored to your needs. Our dentist applies a professional whitening gel to your teeth while protecting your gums. A session takes about 90 minutes at our practices. It suits people with limited time who would like to see a change after a single visit.

Results vary, and your dentist will explain what is realistic for your teeth.

How do take-home whitening kits work?

A take-home kit uses custom-fitted trays made for your teeth and a whitening gel that is less concentrated than the gel used in the chair. Because of this, results usually build gradually, over about two to three weeks, rather than straight away. Take-home whitening can also be used after an in-chair session to help maintain the result.

Who is whitening suitable for, and who should wait?

Before any whitening treatment, you need healthy teeth and gums. We examine your mouth first because whitening is not suitable for everyone. Existing fillings, crowns and veneers do not change colour with whitening gel, so your dentist will explain how they may look after treatment. Tell us if you have sensitive teeth, gum disease, decay, or if you are pregnant or breastfeeding. Whitening is intended for adults.

What are the risks and limits of whitening?

Temporary tooth sensitivity and gum irritation are known side effects of whitening. Results differ between people, and some stains respond less than others. Read more on our page about the risks involved with teeth whitening . If you are thinking about charcoal products, read our article on charcoal whitening and ask your dentist first.

How much does whitening cost?

Fees depend on the option you choose, and we quote before treatment starts so you know the cost in advance. Fees published at the time of writing should be confirmed with your clinic. We offer interest-free payment plans through Payright, subject to eligibility and approval, and HICAPS on-site claiming where your cover allows. Whitening is usually a cosmetic treatment, so health fund rebates are not always available.

How can you look after your whitened teeth?

Good oral hygiene helps your result last. Brush twice a day with fluoride toothpaste, clean between your teeth, and limit staining foods and drinks where you can. Regular check-ups let us review your teeth and advise when a top-up may suit you. Our article explains how long teeth whitening lasts .

The three whitening methods the published advice describes

Most whitening pages describe two options. The Victorian Department of Health describes three, and the third one exists for a specific problem that the other two cannot fix.

In the clinic. The Department's description: "high concentration gel is painted on the teeth for about an hour."

At home, with a custom tray. "Put the gel in a custom-fit whitening mouthguard and wear it for a few hours or overnight, for around one to 2 weeks." Note custom-fit — the tray is made for your teeth, which is what distinguishes this from a kit bought off a shelf.

Internally, for one particular cause. This is the one usually left out: "A third type of whitening called 'internal whitening,' is specifically for teeth that have discoloured after root canal treatment and involves putting the bleach inside the tooth in the dental clinic."

That matters because a tooth that has darkened after root canal treatment has darkened from the inside. The Department explains why elsewhere: "a pulp-free tooth that is sealed with a filling rather than covered by a crown may eventually turn grey." Bleaching the outside of such a tooth is treating the wrong surface. If one tooth is noticeably darker than its neighbours and has had root canal treatment, internal whitening is the method that addresses it — and it is done in the clinic, not at home.

On supermarket and chemist products , the Department is measured rather than dismissive: "Products you can buy at supermarkets and chemists may use a similar ingredient but only contain a small amount, so it is not as effective." Similar ingredient, less of it, less effect. It does not call them unsafe, and it does not say they do nothing.

There is a regulatory reason for that difference in strength, and it comes from a different source. Australian Dental Association Policy 2.2.8 sets the thresholds: products above 6% hydrogen peroxide or 18% carbamide peroxide may only be supplied by registered dental practitioners. So the gap the Department describes in terms of effectiveness is, in regulatory terms, a gap in permitted concentration — which is also why the clinic version is described as "high concentration gel".

What the state health advice does not give is any figure for how much lighter your teeth will get. There is no shade count, no "up to N shades" claim anywhere in it — it says only that whitening "lightens the colour of tooth enamel". Any shade-number promise you encounter is someone else's marketing rather than published health advice, and we are not going to add one.

Sources: Better Health Channel (Victorian Department of Health), Cosmetic dentistry and teeth whitening, betterhealth.vic.gov.au (reviewed 12 December 2025); Root canal treatment, betterhealth.vic.gov.au (reviewed 14 July 2025); Australian Dental Association Policy Statement 2.2.8. All accessed 5 November 2026.

The risks the Department names, and the sentence that resets expectations

The published advice gives whitening its own "what are the main risks?" list. It is short, and every item on it is the kind of thing worth knowing before you book rather than after.

Some things in your mouth will not change colour. The Department's list: "Tooth decay, fillings, crowns, bridges, veneers, false teeth and some types of discolouration do not whiten."

Read that list carefully, because it has a consequence people do not anticipate. If you have a tooth-coloured filling in a front tooth, it was matched to the shade of your tooth at the time it was placed. Whitening the tooth around it does not whiten the filling — so a restoration that currently blends in can become visible precisely because the treatment worked. That is an argument for discussing the sequence with your dentist, not an argument against whitening.

The phrase "some types of discolouration do not whiten" is also doing real work. The Department does not publish a list of which types, so the honest answer is that it depends on the cause of your discolouration, which is something that has to be looked at. Its own instruction before any cosmetic treatment is to "find out what is causing the unsatisfactory appearance of your teeth".

Sensitivity is common, and temporary. The Department's wording: "Commonly causes temporary tooth sensitivity." Both halves matter — common enough to expect, and described as temporary.

Gum irritation, if the gel goes where it should not. "If the gel overflows, it can cause temporary gum irritation." This is one of the practical arguments for a custom-fit tray over a one-size tray: a tray that fits holds the gel against the teeth rather than against the gum.

And then the sentence that resets the whole conversation : "Whitening is not permanent."

Four words, and they are the ones most likely to be left out of a description of the treatment. What the Department offers instead of permanence is maintenance. Its list "for longer lasting effects":

"brush your teeth twice a day and floss once a day"

"do not smoke and limit food and drinks with strong colours such as black coffee and red wine"

"visit the dentist every 6 to 12 months for professional cleaning."

Three items, and the second is the one that does most of the work — the Department names black coffee and red wine specifically, and smoking first.

Worth noting too that whitening sits inside a sequence rather than at the front of one. The Department's position on any cosmetic procedure is that "the first step is to make sure your teeth and mouth are in good health", and its reason is put bluntly: "Treat any disease first. Your health is the priority." Whitening a tooth with untreated decay in it is the wrong order of operations, and decay is on the list of things that will not whiten anyway.

Source: Better Health Channel (Victorian Department of Health), Cosmetic dentistry and teeth whitening, betterhealth.vic.gov.au (page reviewed 12 December 2025; accessed 5 November 2026).

Frequently asked questions

Is whitening at the dentist different from over-the-counter kits?

Yes. Whitening at Core Dental starts with an examination, and treatment is tailored to your teeth. Our team can protect your gums and monitor sensitivity, which is harder with over-the-counter products. Results still vary for each person.

How long does in-chair Zoom whitening take?

An in-chair Zoom whitening session at our practices takes about 90 minutes and is completed in a single visit. Your dentist will confirm the time when you book and explain what to expect afterwards.

How long do take-home kits take to work?

Take-home kits use a gentler gel, so results build gradually over about two to three weeks. Follow your dentist's instructions on how long to wear the trays each day.

Will whitening change my fillings or crowns?

No. Fillings, crowns and veneers do not whiten like natural enamel. Your dentist will assess your teeth first and explain whether any restorations may need replacing to match your new shade.

Does whitening damage my teeth?

Whitening carried out after an examination and under dental supervision is intended to be safe, but temporary sensitivity and gum irritation can occur. Tell us if you have concerns so we can tailor treatment.

What is internal whitening?

It is a third method, for one specific cause. The Victorian Department of Health describes it as "specifically for teeth that have discoloured after root canal treatment", and it "involves putting the

bleach inside the tooth in the dental clinic". A tooth that has darkened from the inside is not helped by bleaching its outer surface, which is why this method exists.

Why are supermarket whitening products less effective?

Because of how much active ingredient they contain. The Department's wording is that they "may use a similar ingredient but only contain a small amount, so it is not as effective". There is a regulatory reason as well: Australian Dental Association Policy 2.2.8 restricts products above 6% hydrogen peroxide or 18% carbamide peroxide to supply by registered dental practitioners.

Can whitening irritate my gums?

It can, and the published advice names the cause: "if the gel overflows, it can cause temporary gum irritation". That is one practical argument for a custom-fit tray, which holds the gel against the teeth rather than against the gum.

Does whitening work on every kind of discolouration?

No. The Department states that "some types of discolouration do not whiten", without publishing a list of which ones — so the answer for your teeth depends on the cause. Its instruction before any cosmetic treatment is to "find out what is causing the unsatisfactory appearance of your teeth", which is a question for an examination.

What keeps the result looking good for longer?

The Department's own three-item list, which follows its statement that "whitening is not permanent": brush twice a day and floss once a day; "do not smoke and limit food and drinks with strong colours such as black coffee and red wine"; and "visit the dentist every 6 to 12 months for professional cleaning".

Related services and further reading

Teeth whitening

Cosmetic dentistry

Why should I go to the dentist for teeth whitening?

In-chair whitening or take-home kits?

Risks involved with teeth whitening

What colour should my teeth be?

How long does teeth whitening last?

Dental payment plans

How can we help?

If you would like to talk about whitening, our team can help at any Core Dental clinic, from Southbank to Berwick . Book an examination, tell us what you would like to change, and we will explain your options and give you a quote before treatment starts.

Core Dental at a glance

Nine Core Dental clinics across Melbourne: Southbank, South Melbourne, Caroline Springs, Carrum Downs, Epping, Wyndham, Berwick, Bayside and Glenferrie.

Open six days a week: Monday to Friday 8.00am to 6.00pm and Saturday mornings.

We quote before treatment starts and offer interest-free payment plans, with HICAPS on-site claiming.

Call 13 13 16 or book online at coredental.com.au.

Contact Core Dental

Phone	13 13 16
Booking	Online via coredental.com.au
Hours	Monday to Friday 8.00am to 6.00pm, Saturday mornings, Sunday closed
Clinics	Southbank , South Melbourne , Caroline Springs , Carrum Downs , Epping , Wyndham , Berwick , Bayside , Glenferrie

Results, recovery times and potential risks vary for each individual. This information is general in nature and is intended for people over 18. Seek advice from a qualified, AHPRA-registered practitioner before proceeding.

What is Zoom whitening at Core Dental?

Zoom whitening is the in-chair whitening treatment we offer at Core Dental. It is completed at the practice in a single session of about 90 minutes, after an examination, and results vary from person to person.

How long is an in-chair whitening session at Core Dental?

An in-chair whitening session at our practices takes about 90 minutes in a single sitting. Our team will confirm timing when you book and explain what to expect during and after treatment.

What causes teeth to lose their colour?

Red wine, coffee, tea, berries, chocolate and lollies can stain teeth, as can smoking and some medications and antibiotics. Teeth also darken and become more opaque with age. Our dentists can assess the cause at an examination.

What is extrinsic and intrinsic tooth discolouration?

Extrinsic discolouration is staining on the enamel surface, commonly linked to age, diet and oral hygiene. Intrinsic discolouration affects the inner tooth and often follows trauma or internal bleeding. Core Dental dentists assess which applies.

Does Core Dental offer take-home whitening kits?

Yes. We offer customised take-home whitening kits as well as in-chair whitening, or a combination of both. Take-home kits use a gentler gel, so results build over about two to three weeks.

Can I pay for whitening at Core Dental in instalments?

We quote before treatment starts and offer interest-free Payright plans, subject to eligibility and approval, with HICAPS claiming on-site. Rebates for cosmetic treatment vary by cover, so check with your fund and our team.

How do I book teeth whitening at Core Dental?

Call 13 13 16 or book online at coredental.com.au for an examination at any of our nine clinics. Our dentist will check your teeth and gums and explain which whitening option, if any, suits you.