How Long Does Teeth Whitening Last? | Core Dental

Canonical: https://www.coredental.com.au/long-teeth-whitening-last/

Details:

Teeth whitening results are not permanent, and how long they last depends on the type of treatment and how you look after your teeth afterwards. In-chair whitening, such as Zoom whitening, often lasts around 12 months, although this varies with your starting shade and your diet. Take-home whitening builds up gradually over about two to three weeks, and its longevity depends on your maintenance routine. At Core Dental our dentists can assess your teeth and explain what to expect.

Why don't teeth whitening results last forever?

Teeth naturally take up stains from the foods, drinks and habits in your mouth over time. As that happens the teeth gradually become discoloured again, which is why whitening results are not permanent. Whitening changes the shade of your teeth, but it does not stop staining from building up again.

What causes teeth to discolour?

Many everyday indulgences make it harder to keep teeth looking their natural colour. Rich foods and drinks such as berries, red wine, tea and coffee can all cause discolouration, and smoking can add to it. Other causes can include some antibiotic medications, particularly tetracyclines, and medical conditions such as fluorosis. As a general rule, teeth also tend to become more opaque with age.

Your dentist can work out the likely cause or causes in your individual case. This helps you choose the right treatment, and avoiding the causes, especially straight after whitening, helps the result last longer.

How long do in-chair whitening results last?

In-chair whitening is carried out at the clinic in one visit. At Core Dental we offer Zoom whitening, a light-accelerated bleaching treatment. Your dentist applies a protective layer to your gums and soft tissues, then applies a whitening gel that is activated with an LED light.

Results from in-chair whitening often last about 12 months, but this can vary with your pre-existing tooth shade and your dietary habits. The result is usually most noticeable straight after treatment and then gradually diminishes. Individual results vary, and your dentist will not be able to promise a particular shade.

How long does take-home whitening take to work, and how long do results last?

For whitening at home, we can provide a kit with custom-made trays that are moulded to your teeth, together with whitening gel. You apply the gel to your teeth using the trays, which are kept in place for up to 20 minutes per day, generally for about two to three weeks. Results develop gradually over that time.

How long the effect lasts afterwards depends largely on your maintenance routine and on how much you expose your teeth to staining foods, drinks and habits. Because the trays are made to fit your teeth, you can keep them and your dentist can advise whether they can be used again for a top-up.

What should you avoid after teeth whitening?

The first 48 hours after treatment are an important period, because teeth can take up stains more readily. Avoid dark-coloured foods and drinks during this time. To help keep your result for longer in the weeks and months after that:

Reduce how often you have dark-coloured foods and drinks, such as red wine, tea, coffee and berries.

Use a straw for coffee, tea and other staining drinks.

Rinse your mouth with water after eating or drinking anything with dark pigments.

Avoid smoking and other habits that cause discolouration.

Tell us about any sensitivity you feel after whitening, as your dentist can suggest ways to manage it.

Which teeth whitening treatment is suitable for you?

Whitening products are available from pharmacies, or from a dentist, who will either perform in-chair whitening or show you how to whiten at home. A dentist can check your teeth and gums first, identify any decay or gum problems that need attention before whitening, and explain which approach is safe for you. Whitening does not change the colour of fillings, crowns or veneers, so your dentist will also consider any existing dental work.

Fees, offers, rebates and finance terms change over time, so please ask for a written quote before you start. At Core Dental we quote before treatment starts, and we offer interest-free payment plans for eligible patients. Terms apply and fees published at September 2026 should be confirmed with your clinic.

How can you maintain whiter teeth?

In practice, many people combine the two approaches. In-chair whitening can lighten your teeth noticeably in one visit, although the result fades over time. Some dentists then suggest a short course of take-home whitening, such as two to three weeks every three to six months, to help maintain the result in the longer term. Whether this suits you depends on your teeth, your sensitivity and your goals, so ask your dentist for advice that fits your situation.

Regular check-ups and cleans also help, because professional cleaning removes surface stain that brushing does not. Our team can assess the cause of your discolouration, advise which treatments are suitable and give you aftercare advice to help your result last.

The honest answer: no source gives a duration

This page asks how long whitening lasts. The straight answer is that no authority we have read publishes a figure, and we would rather say that than repeat a number from somewhere else.

What the Victorian Department of Health does state is the limit itself: "Whitening is not permanent."

That is the whole of the published claim on durability. The Australian Dental Association's policy on whitening likewise gives no duration, and it goes further in cautioning about the expectations set elsewhere: "The marketing of some teeth whitening products directly available to Australian consumers encourages unrealistic expectations about whitening results and promotes regular ongoing use to

maintain desired effects. This is a concern given the lack of clinical data supporting frequent home use of such products over long periods."

Two things in that sentence are worth separating. One, expectations about results are routinely overstated. Two, the fix those products propose — keep using them indefinitely — is not supported by clinical data over long periods.

So anyone quoting "whitening lasts X months" is going beyond what the published evidence supports. What the Department does offer instead is more useful: a list of what makes the effect last longer.

Sources: Better Health Channel (Victorian Department of Health), Cosmetic dentistry and teeth whitening, betterhealth.vic.gov.au (reviewed 12 December 2025); Australian Dental Association, Policy Statement 2.2.8 - Teeth Whitening (Bleaching) By Persons other than Dental Practitioners, ada.org.au (the policy states its last review as September 2025). Both accessed 6 November 2026.

What the Department says makes it last longer

Instead of a duration, the published advice gives three behaviours. They are worth reading closely, because one of them is a clinical appointment and the other two are the things people actually change.

For longer lasting effects, the Department advises:

"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"

On the first. This is the Department's standard oral hygiene advice, and its wider guidance adds the detail that matters: brush "along the gum line in small circles", use "a toothbrush with a small head and soft bristles and a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste", and afterwards "spit out the fluoride toothpaste - do not swallow it, and do not rinse with water". On cleaning between teeth, without floss or an interdental brush "up to a third of each tooth doesn't get cleaned".

On the second. Black coffee and red wine are the Department's own examples of strongly coloured food and drink. Smoking appears separately across its advice as a risk factor for gum disease and, with alcohol, for oral cancer — "quit smoking and limit alcohol intake to reduce your risk of oral cancer". The Department points to Quitline for help.

On the third. Professional cleaning is what removes what brushing cannot. "Professional cleaning removes built-up debris from the teeth. This may include food particles, soft plaque (bacterial growth) or hard calculus (caused by the mineral deposits from saliva onto the soft plaque, sometimes called tartar)", after which "the dental professional then cleans and polishes your teeth using a rotating brush with a polishing paste". Calculus does not come off with a brush at any frequency.

What cannot be maintained, whatever you do. "Tooth decay, fillings, crowns, bridges, veneers, false teeth and some types of discolouration do not whiten." If a front tooth has a restoration in it, the mismatch does not fade with time or care — and the Department's advice before any cosmetic treatment is to "find out what is causing the unsatisfactory appearance of your teeth" first.

And an honest word about repeating it. Re-whitening is a clinical decision rather than a schedule. The ADA's requirement is that whitening "should only be performed if the treatment can be justified, and after a comprehensive dental examination has been conducted by a Dental Practitioner", and that "only registered dental practitioners have the expertise to assess whether bleaching is safe for individual patients, to recommend the most appropriate technique and materials". Its specific concern about consumer products is the promotion of "regular ongoing use to maintain desired effects" without long-term data — so "top up whenever it fades" is not advice that the published evidence supports.

The side effects do not change on a second round either. Whitening "commonly causes temporary tooth sensitivity", and "if the gel overflows, it can cause temporary gum irritation".

What to ask if you are considering it again. The Department's list: "What options are available and the pros and the cons of each option."; "What results can be reasonably expected."; "What costs, time and money, are involved and if payment options are available."; "Any possible side effects or complications."

Sources: Better Health Channel (Victorian Department of Health), Cosmetic dentistry and teeth whitening, betterhealth.vic.gov.au (reviewed 12 December 2025); Teeth and mouth care, betterhealth.vic.gov.au (reviewed 25 July 2025); Dental treatment, betterhealth.vic.gov.au (reviewed 3 June 2026); Tooth decay, betterhealth.vic.gov.au (reviewed 28 June 2025); Australian Dental Association, Policy Statement 2.2.8 - Teeth Whitening (Bleaching) By Persons other than Dental Practitioners, ada.org.au (the policy states its last review as September 2025). All accessed 6 November 2026.

Frequently asked questions

Is teeth whitening permanent?

No. Teeth gradually take up stains again after whitening, so results fade over time. How quickly depends on the treatment you choose, your diet, habits such as smoking, and how you care for your teeth afterwards.

Can I have a top-up after whitening?

Often yes. Some people repeat take-home whitening every few months to maintain their shade, but it depends on your teeth and any sensitivity. Ask your dentist whether a top-up is appropriate and how often.

Do whitening results last longer if I avoid coffee and red wine?

Avoiding or reducing staining foods and drinks can help your result last longer, particularly during the first 48 hours. Using a straw and rinsing with water afterwards can also reduce how much stain your teeth pick up.

Will whitening change the colour of my crowns or veneers?

No. Whitening agents lighten natural tooth structure but do not change the shade of fillings, crowns or veneers. Your dentist will check your existing dental work first and explain what to expect so your smile stays even.

Is whitening suitable for everyone?

Not always. Whitening may not suit people with untreated decay, gum disease, significant sensitivity or some other conditions, and it is generally not recommended for young children. A dentist can assess your teeth and tell you whether it is suitable.

How long does teeth whitening last?

No authority we have read publishes a figure, so we are not going to quote one. What the Victorian Department of Health does state is the limit: "Whitening is not permanent."

Why do other pages give a number of months then?

Because they are going beyond the published evidence. The Australian Dental Association's concern is specifically that marketing of consumer products "encourages unrealistic expectations about whitening results and promotes regular ongoing use to maintain desired effects", noting "the lack of clinical data supporting frequent home use of such products over long periods".

What does make the effect last longer?

The Department gives three things: "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."

Which food and drink stain the most?

The Department's own examples are "black coffee and red wine", under the heading of food and drinks with strong colours.

Why does a professional clean help?

Because it removes what brushing cannot. "Professional cleaning removes built-up debris from the teeth. This may include food particles, soft plaque (bacterial growth) or hard calculus (caused by the mineral deposits from saliva onto the soft plaque, sometimes called tartar)." Calculus has hardened and does not come off with a brush.

Does smoking affect it?

The Department lists not smoking among the things that make whitening last longer. Elsewhere it asks you to "quit smoking and limit alcohol intake to reduce your risk of oral cancer", and points to Quitline for help.

Will my fillings or crown stay the same colour?

Yes, and that does not change with maintenance. "Tooth decay, fillings, crowns, bridges, veneers, false teeth and some types of discolouration do not whiten."

Can I just top it up whenever it fades?

That is the practice the ADA cautions about for consumer products, given "the lack of clinical data supporting frequent home use of such products over long periods". Repeating whitening is a clinical decision: it "should only be performed if the treatment can be justified, and after a comprehensive dental examination has been conducted by a Dental Practitioner".

Do the side effects lessen the second time?

The published advice does not say they do. Whitening "commonly causes temporary tooth sensitivity", and "if the gel overflows, it can cause temporary gum irritation".

What should I ask before whitening again?

"What options are available and the pros and the cons of each option."; "What results can be reasonably expected."; "What costs, time and money, are involved and if payment options are available."; "Any possible side effects or complications."

Related services and further reading

Teeth whitening

All about teeth whitening

Risks involved with teeth whitening

Difference between in-chair and take-home whitening kits

Why should I go to the dentist for teeth whitening?

Is charcoal whitening safe?

How long do porcelain veneers last?

Dental check-ups

How can we help?

If you are thinking about whitening, or your last treatment has faded, our team can look at the cause of your discolouration and talk through in-chair and take-home options at any of our nine practices. Call 13 13 16 or book online. You can also read about cosmetic dentistry .

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.

HICAPS on-site claiming, and bulk billing for eligible children under the Child Dental Benefits Schedule.

Contact Core Dental

Phone	13 13 16
Booking	Online through coredental.com.au, or call 13 13 16
Hours	Monday to Friday 8.00am to 6.00pm, Saturday 8.00am to 1.30pm (Bayside Saturday 8.30am to 1.30pm), 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.

How long does Zoom whitening usually last?

Zoom whitening at Core Dental often lasts around 12 months, although this varies with your starting tooth shade, diet and habits. Results are not permanent, and our dentists will explain what to expect for your teeth before treatment.

Why do teeth go yellow or dark again after whitening?

Teeth keep taking up stains from foods, drinks and habits such as smoking, so colour gradually returns after whitening. Core Dental dentists can identify the likely causes of your discolouration and suggest ways to slow it down.

How long does home whitening take with a Core Dental kit?

A Core Dental take-home kit includes custom-made trays and whitening gel. You wear the trays for up to 20 minutes a day, generally for about two to three weeks, and results develop gradually over that time.

What should I avoid for 48 hours after whitening?

Avoid dark-coloured foods and drinks, such as coffee, tea, red wine and berries, and avoid smoking. Teeth can take up stain more easily in the first 48 hours, so Core Dental recommends extra care during this period.

How often can I top up my whitening?

Some dentists suggest a short course of take-home whitening every three to six months to maintain a result. Core Dental dentists will advise whether that suits your teeth and sensitivity before recommending a schedule.

Does whitening change the colour of fillings or crowns?

No. Whitening gel lightens natural tooth structure but does not change the shade of fillings, crowns or veneers. Core Dental dentists check your existing dental work before whitening and explain how it may affect your final result.

What causes tooth discolouration?

Common causes include coffee, tea, red wine, berries, smoking, some antibiotics such as tetracyclines, fluorosis and ageing. A Core Dental dentist can examine your teeth and work out which causes apply to you.

How do I book a teeth whitening consultation at Core Dental?

Call 13 13 16 or book online at coredental.com.au. We have nine clinics across Melbourne, open Monday to Friday 8.00am to 6.00pm and Saturday mornings. Our team will assess your teeth and quote before treatment starts.