



TEETH WHITENING

A brighter, more confident smile

Teeth whitening is a popular way to brighten your smile and reduce the appearance of staining and discolouration.

Over time, teeth can naturally become darker or develop stains from foods, drinks and lifestyle factors. Professional teeth whitening can safely lighten the natural colour of your teeth when carried out under the guidance of a dental professional.

At **Cranfield Dental Care**, we believe whitening should be safe, carefully planned and tailored to you.

Why do teeth become discoloured

There are many reasons why teeth can change colour.

Extrinsic staining

Surface staining can build up from:

- Tea and coffee
- Red wine
- Smoking
- Certain foods and drinks
- Plaque and tartar

A professional clean can often improve surface staining before whitening is considered.

Natural changes

As we get older, the outer layer of enamel can become thinner, allowing more of the naturally darker dentine underneath to show through.

Some teeth may also have developed deeper staining or discolouration as a result of trauma, certain medications or changes within the tooth.

Not all types of discolouration respond to whitening in the same way. Your dentist can assess your teeth and explain what results you can realistically expect.

Professional tooth whitening

Professional whitening involves using a whitening product supplied through a dental professional.

Before whitening, your dentist will assess your teeth and gums to make sure whitening is appropriate for you.

Where suitable, we can provide **custom-made whitening trays** designed to fit your mouth comfortably and allow the whitening gel to be applied evenly.

Your dentist will explain:

- How to use your whitening trays
- How much whitening gel to use
- How frequently to whiten
- How long your treatment is expected to take
- What results you can realistically expect
- How to look after your teeth during and after treatment

Following your dentist's instructions is important. **Using more whitening gel or whitening more frequently will not necessarily produce better results and may increase the risk of sensitivity or gum irritation.**

Is tooth whitening safe

When carried out appropriately and under the supervision of a dental professional, tooth whitening is considered a safe way to lighten natural teeth.

The most common side effect is **temporary tooth sensitivity**. Some people may also experience temporary irritation of the gums if whitening gel comes into contact with them.

These effects usually settle after treatment is reduced or stopped.

If you experience significant or persistent sensitivity, stop whitening and contact your dental practice for advice.

Top tip: After you have rinsed the gel from the trays and cleaned your teeth, apply a sensitive toothpaste or Tooth Mousse GC, into your trays and wear them for at least an hour, or overnight if you prefer to reduce sensitivity.

Will whitening work on my fillings, crowns or veneers

This is an important consideration before starting treatment.

Tooth whitening only changes the colour of natural tooth tissue. It does not whiten existing:

- White fillings
- Crowns
- Veneers
- Bridges
- Dental implants

This means that if you have visible restorations, whitening may cause a difference in colour between your natural teeth and your existing dental work.

Your dentist can discuss this with you before treatment and help you decide whether whitening is suitable.

Before you whiten

Your teeth and gums should be healthy before whitening treatment begins.

Your dentist may recommend treating problems such as:

- Tooth decay
- Gum disease
- Broken or leaking fillings
- Cracked teeth
- Significant sensitivity

A professional clean may also be recommended if you have significant plaque, tartar or surface staining.

Whitening isn't a substitute for good oral health. It's important that your teeth and gums are healthy before you begin.

Managing tooth sensitivity

Some sensitivity during whitening is common and is usually temporary.

To help reduce sensitivity:

- Follow the whitening instructions provided by your dentist.
- Don't use more whitening gel than recommended.
- Avoid whitening every day if your dentist advises you to reduce the frequency.
- Use a sensitivity toothpaste if recommended.
- Avoid very hot or cold foods and drinks if your teeth feel sensitive.
- Take a break from whitening if sensitivity becomes uncomfortable.

If sensitivity doesn't settle, speak to your dentist before continuing treatment.

Looking after your newly whitened smile

Once you have achieved your desired shade, good oral hygiene and sensible lifestyle choices can help maintain your results.

Brush twice a day

Use fluoride toothpaste and brush for two minutes each time.

Clean between your teeth

Use interdental brushes or floss once a day to help keep your teeth and gums healthy.

Be mindful of staining foods and drinks

Tea, coffee, red wine and some strongly coloured foods can contribute to staining over time.

You don't necessarily need to avoid them completely, but reducing how frequently you consume them can help maintain your results.

Don't smoke

Smoking can cause significant staining and is harmful to your teeth, gums and general health.

Keep up with your dental appointments

Regular dental examinations and professional cleaning can help keep your smile healthy and looking its best.

How long does tooth whitening last

Whitening isn't permanent.

Your teeth will naturally pick up some staining over time, and the longevity of your results depends on factors such as your diet, lifestyle, oral hygiene and whether you smoke.

Many people choose to use their custom-made trays for **occasional top-up treatments** when their dentist advises it.

Your dentist can recommend an appropriate maintenance routine for you.

Can everyone have their teeth whitened

Tooth whitening isn't suitable for everyone.

Your dentist will consider factors such as your oral health, existing restorations, tooth sensitivity and the cause of any discolouration before recommending treatment.

Whitening is also generally **not recommended for children**, and pregnancy and breastfeeding may be reasons to postpone treatment.

If you are unsure whether whitening is suitable for you, speak to your dentist.

Be careful with DIY whitening

There are many whitening products available online and in shops, including whitening strips, gels, pens and LED devices.

The strength, quality and safety of these products can vary, and some may not be suitable for your teeth or gums.

Professional whitening provides the benefit of having your teeth assessed first and receiving appropriate products and instructions from a dental professional.

If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Be particularly cautious of products promising dramatic results in a very short period of time.

Your Smile, Your Shade

There is no single 'perfect' shade of white.

The aim of professional whitening is to create a **natural-looking, brighter smile** that suits you.

Your dentist can discuss your expectations and help you understand what level of whitening is achievable based on the natural colour and condition of your teeth.

Ready to brighten your smile

If you're considering tooth whitening, book a consultation with the team at **Cranfield Dental Care**.

We'll assess your teeth, discuss your goals and explain the safest and most appropriate whitening options for you.

A brighter smile starts with healthy teeth.

Cranfield Dental Care

Professional dental care for your smile, from people who know you.

Contact our Reception team 01462 434323 for general enquiries, or speak to our **Treatment Coordinator (TCO)** 07714117790 for advice and information about your treatment options.

We're here to help you understand what's available and find the right next step for you.