

*Ask your  
Dentist!*

*“How can  
we get whiter  
teeth?”*



If the colour of your teeth isn't as white as you'd like it to be, you're not alone. Certain prescription drugs, coffee and tea intake or tobacco use can cause teeth to darken or discolour. Some of us simply have teeth with a natural colour that's not as white as we would like. What can be done? Tooth Bleaching, application of Veneers and Bonding to tooth surfaces are three popular methods for your dentist to help you whiten your teeth.

### *What is Tooth Bleaching?*

Tooth Bleaching is the application of a chemical agent to whiten the enamel of your teeth. The process generally involves the night-time wear of custom-made mouth trays. Ask your dentist if you might be a candidate for tooth bleaching.

### *Is Tooth Bleaching safe?*

Because bleaching agents are designed only for use on your tooth enamel, interaction with your roots, gums and other soft tissue should be kept at a minimum. For this reason, it's advised that you only have your teeth bleached under the supervision of your dentist. Home "do-it-yourself" kits might place your roots, gums and soft tissue at risk. However, having your teeth bleached by your dentist is one safe method of achieving that whiter, brighter smile.

### *What is a Veneer?*

For some patients, Tooth Bleaching isn't the answer to achieving whiter teeth. Depending upon the reason for the tooth's discolouration, bleaching might not be enough to get the job done. Your dentist may recommend the application of a Veneer as an alternative or in addition to tooth whitening.

A Veneer, generally made of porcelain, is a tooth-shaped "facing" that your dentist can attach to the surface of your natural tooth with a durable cement. Veneers are custom-made to the desired shape and colour of your tooth. The application is painless and the veneer itself should last 7-10 years.

### *What about Bonding?*

Like the application of a Veneer, Bonding is a process of applying a cover over a discoloured tooth surface. During the process, your dentist will apply a tooth-coloured plastic resin to the tooth that is bonded and sculpted to the proper shape.

### *What's best for me?*

Ask your dentist what's best to whiten your teeth. The procedures that your dentist will recommend can give you that attractive white smile for years to come.



*Information courtesy of your  
dentist and the Nova Scotia  
Dental Association  
[www.healthyteeth.org](http://www.healthyteeth.org)*