

Considering tooth whitening?

**What you need to know
before committing
to treatment**

The role of the General Dental Council

- We, the General Dental Council (GDC), are the UK's dental regulator. Our role is to protect dental patients. By law, dental professionals must be registered with us to work in the UK and must meet our high standards.
- Tooth whitening is the practice of dentistry. By law, dentistry must only be carried out by dental professionals who are registered with us.
- You can check your dental professional is registered by visiting our website at www.gdc-uk.org.
- A dentist should always assess you before carrying out tooth whitening to confirm whether treatment would be right for you. Registered dental hygienists, dental therapists and clinical dental technicians can also carry out tooth whitening on the instructions of a dentist.

Tooth whitening can lighten the shade of your natural teeth, but before you commit to having treatment it's important that you're fully aware of what to expect, what the risks are and who is allowed to carry it out.

Find out more

There is a lot of information about tooth whitening on our website at www.gdc-uk.org, including an 'FAQs' section. You can find details of:

- who can and can't carry out teeth whitening; and
- the legal situation for tooth whitening.



Questions to ask

You should do some careful research before you commit to having your teeth whitened. Talk to other patients who have received the same treatment or visit another dentist for a second opinion until you feel confident enough to go ahead with treatment.

If your treatment is going to be carried out at the time rather than at a future appointment, don't be afraid to ask simple questions during your appointment. Always ask for a written treatment plan and estimate of the cost before agreeing to start the treatment.

You may want to ask some of the following questions:

- Who will be carrying out the procedure? What training and experience do they have?
- Is the person performing the treatment registered with the GDC? Are they a dentist, dental hygienist, dental therapist or clinical dental technician?
- What types of tooth whitening are available and what are the differences between them?
- What are the risks? Will it hurt?
- What sort of results can I expect?
- Can tooth whitening be carried out on stained veneers, crowns or dentures to make sure they match the colour of my natural teeth?
- Is the work guaranteed for a certain length of time?
- What aftercare is provided and who can I contact for advice after treatment?
- What happens if I'm unhappy with the results? Who will pay for any work that is done to correct any problems?



Get in touch with us if:

- Your tooth whitening was carried out by someone who was not a registered dental professional.
- Your tooth whitening was carried out by a registered dental professional but you are concerned that the treatment has harmed you, or the dental professional's behaviour was below the standard you expected or the standards we have set.
- You were offered tooth whitening by someone who is not registered with us, even if you didn't go ahead with the treatment.

You can find out more about the standards we set in our leaflet, 'Our standards and how they affect your care'.

You can read a copy of the leaflet by visiting the 'Patients' pages of our website at www.gdc-uk.org

Anyone can report their concerns to us, but we only deal with certain types of complaints. Before getting in touch, read our leaflet 'How to report a dental professional to us'. Visit our website or call 020 7167 6000 for a copy.



Check your dental professional is registered.
www.gdc-uk.org
Phone: 020 7167 6000

