

Why Keep Whitening Professional?

With so many whitening products on the market and many of them sold over the counter (OTC), it is important to get educated about whitening and the differences between OTC whitening products and professionally dispensed whitening products. Start the conversation about whitening with your dentist to see which professional whitening option is best for you.

What is the difference between OTC and professional whitening?

There are a variety of over the counter whitening products on the market that range from strips to paint-on pens. Some of these products will whiten the teeth somewhat, while others do not make any change to the color of the teeth. Strips and trays may whiten only the front six teeth due to their design and depending on your smile, causing the shade to be uneven. Whitening pens and other paint-on whitening products have been shown to mainly remove extrinsic stains and do not change the color of the teeth. In fact some of these products have been shown to etch the teeth — something you definitely want to leave to your dentist!

With OTC products, you can walk into a store and pick up a whitening product without getting an examination by a dental professional prior to use. This may sound like a great idea, but you should know that by taking the dental professional out of the treatment process, OTC products open the door for misuse.

The ADA and whitening gurus alike prefer professionally administered teeth whitening over OTC whitening. When someone chooses to whiten their smile under the supervision of their dental professional, they receive added benefits that OTC tooth whiteners simply can't offer:

- An initial exam prior to whitening to determine any sensitivity and significant stains
- A review of the different whitening options to determine which whitening approach best fits within your expectations, needs, and budget
- Benefits like sensitivity prevention and fluoride

Professionally administered whitening is the best way to ensure you'll receive the results you're looking for.