

WHAT STAINS, DISCOLORS, AND DARKENS TEETH?



Certain Diseases and Medical Treatments

Examples include: chemotherapy, infection during pregnancy, the antibiotics tetracycline and doxycycline (in children under age 8), antihistamines, antipsychotic drugs, and antihypertensive medications. Mouth rinses and washes containing chlorhexidine and cetylpyridinium chloride can also stain teeth.



Aging

As you age, the outer layer of enamel on your teeth gets worn away (exposing the yellow dentin). Your tooth dentin also grows as you age, which decreases the size of the pulp.



Diet

Coffee, tea, colas, wines, and some starchy foods such as pasta or potatoes, can create conditions that cause staining. However, rinsing with water and brushing teeth after consuming these can help cut down on discoloration.



Tobacco Use

Black tar builds up and causes staining.



Poor Hygiene

Forgetting to brush and floss your teeth can cause plaque and food stains to build up. Skipping professional dental cleanings can also allow stains to start.



Genetic Variation

Thicker and whiter enamel simply runs in some families.



Some Dental Materials

Some amalgam restorations, especially silver sulfide-containing materials, can give a gray-black cast to your teeth.



Blunt Trauma

During sports, kids can get hit in the mouth. If they are younger than 8, the damage can disturb enamel formation. Trauma can also discolor adult teeth when a sports injury or other impact causes blood flow to decrease to the tooth (or the nerve to die).



Environment

During tooth formation, too much fluoride either from environmental sources (high fluoride levels in water) or from excessive use of fluoride applications, rinses, or toothpaste can cause fluorosis. (It looks like permanent white spots on the teeth).