

Brief Note on Tooth Discoloration

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Received: 03-Jan-2022, Manuscript No. ohdm-22-001; **Editor assigned:** 04-Jan-2022, Pre QC No. ohdm-22-001 (PQ); **Reviewed:** 12-Jan-2022, QC No. ohdm-22-001; **Revised:** 17-Jan-2022, Manuscript No. ohdm-22-001 (R); **Published:** 26-Jan-2022, DOI: 10.35248/2247-2452.22.21.001.

Description

Tooth discoloration is the change in tooth color. They don't look as bright or white as they should. Your teeth may darken, change from white to another color, and have white or dark spots in places. Also known as discolored teeth; tooth discoloration; tooth pigmentation.

Types of Discoloration

Tooth discoloration can be classified into three different categories as follows

- **Extrinsic:** With extrinsic tooth discoloration, it's likely that the stains are only affecting the tooth enamel, or the surface of the tooth. The most common causes of extrinsic stains include: food, beverages, tobacco
- **Intrinsic:** This type of stain is located within the tooth, which makes it more resistant to over the counter whitening products. It often appears greyish. Examples of endogenous stains include certain medications, tooth trauma or damage, tooth decay, too much fluoride, genetics, and so on.
- **Aging:** Age-related discoloration can often be caused by both external and internal factors. Underneath the white enamel cover of our teeth is a soft area called dentin. Over the years, our outer enamel has been brushed to thin and yellowish dentin can be seen through.

Causes

Daily brushing and dental floss can keep your smile bright and white. However, as you may have noticed, even with dental care, it looks a little yellow and loses its brilliance. This is perfectly normal. Here are some reasons why this may happen to you.

- 1. Food and Drink:** Coffee, tea and red wine play a major role in tooth discoloration. They all contain a strong colour pigment, a chromogenic that attaches to the white outer part of the tooth, known as enamel.
- 2. Poor dental hygiene:** Not enough brushing, dental floss, and rinsing to remove plaque and stain-causing substances.
- 3. Dental material:** Some of the materials used in dentistry, such as amalgam restorations, especially those containing silver sulfide, can give the teeth a greyish black color.
- 4. Fluorosis:** Excessive fluoride from environmental sources (naturally high fluoride levels in water) or overuse (fluoride addition, rinsing, toothpaste, and fluoride supplements by oral

ingestion) can cause tooth discoloration.

- 5. Tobacco use:** Two chemicals in tobacco, tar and nicotine, create a stubborn stain. Tar is naturally dark. Nicotine is colorless, but when mixed with oxygen it becomes a yellowish color. Both make dirt together.
- 6. Trauma:** If you injure your mouth, your teeth may discolor. This is because the teeth react to trauma by placing darker dentin than the outer enamel.
- 7. Infectious Diseases:** Hereditary diseases can affect the thickness of tooth enamel or the calcium or protein content of tooth enamel. This can cause the color to change. Metabolic disorders can lead to changes in tooth color and shape.
- 8. Medications:** Many different types of medications have the side effect of darkening your teeth. Also, children taking medication when teeth are being formed either in utero may experience tooth discoloration in adults later in life. Medications taken by pregnant mothers can change the color and hardness of tooth enamel. Some of these reasons are preventable and others occur throughout life.

Treatment

The most common causes of brown discoloration of teeth include smoking and frequent consumption of coffee and soda, including caramel. Over-the-counter whitening products can bring some improvement, but professional tooth whitening treatments have the most dramatic results. Unlike over-the-counter treatments, which can decline in days or weeks, professional whitening treatments can last for years. Of course, if you continue to smoke or drink dirty foods and drinks, the results can quickly disappear.

The best treatment for discolored teeth depends on the root cause of the discoloration. Discoloration that penetrates deep into the teeth or is caused by tooth decay may require padding, crowns, veneers, or other types of restoration procedures to improve the health and appearance of the teeth. Small spots can often be treated with professional whitening treatments. Of course, it is best to prevent discoloration in the first place. Some simple lifestyle changes will help to keep your teeth as white as possible. Dental hygiene should be prioritized. This includes brushing your teeth at least twice a day, applying dental floss daily, and using mouthwash as directed by your dentist. You will also need to visit your dentist every 6 months for professional examination and cleaning. Stop smoking and limit the consumption of foods and drinks that stain your teeth.