

TEEN WARNING ON DIY TEETH WHITENING DANGERS
Rise in Websites Offering Homemade Recipes Will Result in Long-Term Damage

London – 5th November, 2010 – Leading tooth wear specialist Professor Andrew Eder today issued a stark warning regarding DIY teeth whitening treatments, having noticed a rise in teenagers trying homemade recipes. Websites such as wikihow.com, tipking.com and ehow.com show discussions among teens who try out various recipes involving baking soda and salt which can be dangerous for their dental health and long-term appearance of their teeth. There are risks that 18-year-old student Fiona Watson wished she had known about before applying a concoction she made herself to try and achieve a sparkling smile.

According to Professor Eder, dentist and Clinical Director of the London Tooth Wear Centre (www.restorative-dentistry.co.uk);

“Just this past month alone I’ve had a number of patients expressing concern about their teenage children, who they have caught trying various homemade pastes to try and whiten their own teeth. There seems to be a growing concern among teens about the appearance of their teeth and the internet offers many whitening tips and recipes – some of which clearly have the potential to damage otherwise healthy teeth.”

He adds;

“Long-term studies are available to show that professionally supervised home whitening using the right concentrations of peroxide gel are safe. However, household baking soda is an abrasive, which means that with repeated use the white enamel may be worn away and eventually leave teeth browner and with increased sensitivity. The gums and adjacent soft tissues can become irritated as well. In addition, salt crystals will scratch the enamel – even if dissolved (just as you would feel ‘gritty’ after swimming in the sea!). Ingesting strong concentrations of baking soda can also irritate the throat and may potentially cause stomach problems.”

This is something that Fiona Watson, who is based in Newmarket, Suffolk and is doing her A-levels, knows only too well after trying out a formula she downloaded from the Web. She says;

“I wanted a whiter smile like celebs in magazines, so I used a recipe that I found online to make my own tooth whitening formula. After brushing my teeth just once before bed with the salt and baking soda I woke up in the night with a stomach ache. Not only was I up all night feeling ill, the next morning my gums were sore too. Some of my mates have tried it as well and we all regret it.”

Professor Eder concludes;

“Excessive tooth wear can result from acids – such as fruit, sweets and fizzy drinks which dissolve the enamel, or abrasives, which ‘rub’ the enamel away. Any repeated exposure to these can have a detrimental effect on teeth. There is no question about the long-term damage seen in patients who regularly use the classic ‘smokers’ polish’ from the chemist. In particular with teens, parents must be vigilant and if they’re concerned should seek professional advice from a dentist.”

Professor Eder is the Clinical Director and Founder of the London Tooth Wear Centre (www.restorative-dentistry.co.uk). He has been in Private Practice since qualifying from King's in 1986 and is recognised by the General Dental Council as a Specialist in Restorative Dentistry and Prosthodontics. He is on the Board of Advisers for the British Dental Journal and, as an evaluator for Clinical Research Associates in the United States, Professor Eder has also been involved in the assessment of dental materials, clinical techniques and new concepts in dentistry. The London Tooth Wear Centre is on the second floor of 57a Wimpole Street, London W1G 8YP. Members of the public wishing to make an appointment for consultation can ring 020 7486 7180. For all media enquiries please contact Ms. Lauren Horncastle on 020 7250 4750 or email lhorncaste@caciquepr.com