

MEDICAL MISCELLANY

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Are yellow teeth stronger than white?

WHILE yellowing *can* mean your teeth are strong, it can also be a sign of weakness.

Healthy teeth can appear yellow because they've absorbed fluoride when developing. They have higher quantities of the mineral fluorapatite, giving them a yellower, sometimes mottled appearance. This mineral is resistant to decay, and so yellow teeth due to fluoride



are therefore stronger than whiter teeth, says Professor Andrew Eder of the UCL Eastman Dental Institute.

The other explanation is that the enamel, the outer layer of the tooth, has been worn away, exposing dentine, the tissue that gives teeth their strength. If this has been exposed, teeth are more vulnerable to decay.

How can you tell whether your teeth are healthily or worryingly yellow? Look for receding gums and sensitivity to hot and cold, as this can indicate dental erosion.

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