

Health news

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This month's round-up
of the latest health issues

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How white should you go?

IF YOU BELIEVE THOSE TV MAKEOVER programmes, a whiter-than-white smile can knock years off you. And there's certainly no shortage of techniques. Professor Andrew Eder, clinical director of the London Tooth Wear Centre, gives his verdict:

Over-the-counter whitening toothpaste shouldn't be used long term. 'Regular users risk wearing away tooth enamel permanently, especially if it has abrasive content.'

In-surgery bleaching may use a stronger whitening agent than over-the-counter treatments. 'It's effective, but you can't control how light your teeth will go. I don't offer it in my own surgery because of reports of sensitivity and a lack of evidence

of long-term safety,' says Professor Eder. Home bleaching, supervised by a dentist, 'bubbles' out the dirt rather than damaging the tooth surface. 'You can control how light

you go, as the transformation is gradual, and there's 20 years of data to show it's safe.'

Only use a registered dental practitioner, and avoid beauty salons or centres that offer whitening treatments unless you're sure the dentist is official. The British Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry has a list at www.bacd.com. □



Check before
you get your
teeth whitened