


THE DARK SIDE OF TEETH WHITENING

A whiter, brighter smile seems to be the new national obsession, if the flood of over-the-counter products and in-office procedures is any indication. While it is an effective cosmetic antiager, the ideal tooth color is several shades lighter than it was ten years ago, so many of us are trying for a smile that is whiter than anything ever seen in nature—and that's the trouble. Used improperly, bleaching agents can make teeth sensitive, and if they already have a lot of natural wear, can give teeth a blue cast. "While irritation and sensitivity will go away within a few days, blue teeth can last up to a year," warns Nicholas Davis, D.D.S., president of the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry. So consult a dentist to choose the safest method and products for you. And don't assume you can get Chiclet-white choppers with bleach alone: Many blazing Hollywood smiles are achieved with porcelain veneers, which can set you back about \$1,000–\$2,000 per tooth.

A blue toothbrush is positioned diagonally in the upper left. Below it, a row of seven white teeth is arranged in a slight curve. The background is a solid blue color.

Overbleaching can leave you blue in the face.