

5 Steps to Get a Brighter Smile Today



A bright smile is a high priority for most women, but that doesn't mean they're willing to spend thousands of dollars — and hours in the dentist's chair — on a high-tech professional whitening treatment.

So, what's a girl to do to get those pearly whites?

It doesn't take much, according to top New York City cosmetic dentist Elisa Mello. Here, some quick fixes you can do throughout the day to get instant results:

In the Morning

If you like using whitening strips but don't like sitting around for the 10 minutes they're doing their magic, then multitask. "Use over-the-counter whitening strips and whiten while you wake up in the shower," Mello recommends.

At Lunch

Swish water in your mouth for 30 seconds right after eating to help prevent stains from food, she says. Better yet? Keep a bottle of mouthwash at your desk, so you have it readily available.

During a Midday Snack

If cravings hit, chomp on apples, pears, strawberries, celery, or carrots. "Any raw fruit or vegetable that happens to produce saliva will help remove bacteria and whiten your teeth," she tells Marie Claire.

After Work

When going out for the night, opt for a lipstick that will make your teeth appear brighter instantly. Lipsticks with blue undertones — rose, red, burgundy, and plum shades — work best. But be careful when choosing a hue with orange undertones. Those "can make your teeth appear dull and yellow," Mello says.

At Dinner

When you finish your meal, pop in some whitening gum, which contains stain-removing calprox. Still, any gum will work. Because it stimulates saliva flow, it will act as a natural detergent.

Before Bed

Just like it's a bad habit to go to sleep without removing your makeup, don't hit the sheets until you brush — and try to get in a quick flossing session while you're at it.