

Bright Smile, Bright Year

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The saying goes, "Smile and the world smiles with you. Frown and you frown alone." If it's true and you don't want to go through life solo, then it's key to keep your pearly whites as, well, white as possible. Amazingly, a few simple tricks can keep your teeth bright and clean all year long.

- **Eat your veggies raw.** "Foods like carrots and cucumbers, which are structurally hard, physically remove any stains and bacteria from teeth," says Lana Rozenberg, DDS, a New York-based cosmetic dentist. These veggies also require lots of chewing which produces saliva, a natural detergent that rinses staining colors and bacteria off your teeth. "Sugarless gum is also good for producing saliva," adds Rozenberg.

- **Do damage control.** "Any food or drink that would stain a white shirt can stain your teeth," says Rozenberg. These include cherries, blueberries, coffee, soy sauce and dark sodas, among others. Avoid them all together or make sure to drink water after eating or drinking them to wash stains away. "Oranges also wash acid off of teeth," says Rozenberg. When it comes to staining beverages, sip them through a straw so they don't come in contact with teeth.

- **Have an apple a day.** Apples may keep more than the doctor away. They may keep the dentist away, too. That is if you eat them before tooth-staining foods. "Apples contain a protein that forms a natural layer on the teeth," explains Rozenberg. "This prevents staining foods from sticking to teeth."

- **Fake it with makeup.** "Avoid orange-red lipsticks, which accentuate yellow teeth," suggests Raychel Wade, owner of Cheek to Chic. "Instead, use a blue-based lipstick to cheat your teeth to look more white. These shades are brighter and cooler so they won't highlight yellow teeth, but instead make teeth look whiter." These include lipsticks that are rich red, berry or burgundy hues.

- **Try a new tube.** Though drugstore aisles are bursting with toothpastes claiming to clean your teeth, a new one actually contains hydrogen peroxide the same whitening ingredient used in whitening strips and dentist office whitening treatments. Try giving stains the brush off with Colgate Optic White Toothpaste.

- **Or think outside the toothpaste tube.** Though toothpastes with whitening ingredients can clean teeth, so can a few basic grocery store items. One is baking soda. Simply mix half a teaspoon with $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt and then brush teeth. Or do the same with a few mashed strawberries, which contain a natural tooth whitener called malic acid.