

## TEETH WHITENING TREND CAN BENEFIT KIDS SQUADRON BLVD PEDIATRIC DENTIST ADVISES CAUTION

**New City, N.Y. May 1, 2014**— A big, welcoming smile is a great way to meet people and make friends. Yet many kids and teens are self-conscious about their smiles because of discolored or off-white teeth. This concern is even more prevalent lately with the growing emphasis on whitening teeth.

“A smile can have an enormous impact on a child’s self-esteem. Children who are self-conscious about their smiles can seem reserved and appear not interested in making friends,” says Fern Cytryn, D.D.S., a New City Pediatric Dentist. “I’ll often see them hiding their mouths behind their hands or consciously keeping their mouth’s shut to avoid showing their teeth to the world.”

There are many possible causes of discolored teeth and white spots on the tooth enamel of children. Some of the most common include trauma to a tooth or illness during tooth development that disrupts enamel formation. In addition, a tooth can discolor if a child takes certain medicines during key stages of tooth development. Poor oral hygiene, especially during orthodontic treatment, can also lead to discolored areas on teeth, white spots and cavities.

Teenagers, especially, will focus on an off-white smile. “I get a lot of requests for bleaching, especially during prom season, spring break and when they are going off to college,” says Dr. Cytryn. “I recommend they undertake a bleaching program under the guidance of a Dentist and not use the commercially available home whitening kits.”

Home tooth whitening kits are similar to those used in the dental office, but the concentrations of active ingredients are lower than in a dental professional’s product. “Because I can control the application and understand how the products work, I can work with higher concentrations,” Dr. Cytryn says. “Also, I worry about overly enthusiastic teens ignoring the instructions on the home whitening kits and applying them for more than the recommended time. That can cause prolonged sensitivity and damage to the enamel.”

Another option for children with discolored teeth is bonding. Bonding uses a composite resin to restore decayed teeth, make cosmetic improvements and change or improve the color of the teeth. For the front teeth the composite covers the flaws with a thin coating of plastic material on the front surface. After the coating is applied, the Dentist sculpts colors and shapes the surface to provide a pleasing result. Then she or he uses a high-intensity light to harden the material and polishes the surface.

There are some limitations when it comes to bonding. Bonded teeth are not as strong as the original tooth structure. Nail biting, biting into hard foods, biting into any object, and sports accidents (or accidents of any kind) can damage them. Bonded teeth must be maintained with good oral hygiene and regular dental visits. The bonding can become discolored and worn over time and may need to be redone; and a bonded tooth can not be bleached.

What about whitening toothpastes for older children and teens? “I don’t recommend toothpastes with whitening agents until the roots of all their adult teeth are fully formed,” advises Dr. Cytryn. “After that a whitening toothpaste (containing fluoride) should only be used once a day because these products are abrasive. As a result, they can sometimes wear away tooth enamel, making teeth sensitive to heat and cold. When using a whitening toothpaste, I advise them to use regular, non-abrasive toothpaste (with fluoride) for their second daily brushing.”

“No child should have to feel like they have to hide their teeth,” concludes Dr. Cytryn. “With today’s advances, all kids should have the freedom to meet the world with a big, wide smile.”

*Fern Cytryn, D.D.S. provides Pediatric Dentistry with a smile. “Dr. Red”, as she is often called by patients in honor of her red hair, provides comprehensive pediatric dental services for children from infancy through young adulthood. Her practice, Pediatric and Adolescent Dentistry of Rockland County, P.C. is located at 16 Squadron Blvd Suite 101 New City, NY. For more information about Dr. Cytryn’s practice please call 845-634-3200 or visit [www.drfernsmile.com](http://www.drfernsmile.com).*