

# WHY DO CHILDREN HAVE DISCOLORED TEETH?

As your child's teeth erupt you may notice mottling of certain teeth or a difference in color between teeth. These color differences can be a normal stage of development as children's permanent teeth are often naturally darker than their baby teeth. They may also indicate malformation of the teeth due to various influences.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. *Why are my child's teeth discolored?*

Children's teeth, even while still in the gums, can be influenced by many factors.

Here are some factors that can cause discoloration in children's teeth:

- **Bacteria** – Poor or ineffective brushing habits can lead to a buildup of bacteria on the teeth, which can cause discoloration. If your child's teeth look yellow or orange, it's most likely because they aren't being cleaned thoroughly and have developed a build-up of stained plaque.
- **Injury** – A tooth can look pink or grey if it has been injured.
- **Fluoride** – The correct amount of fluoride makes the tooth enamel more resistant to decay. However, exposure to excessive levels over a period of time can cause discolorations such as white spots, white streaks, or brown tinting in your child's teeth.
- **Genetics** – Some genetic conditions can lead to underdeveloped tooth enamel that can be discolored or can be more likely to collect stain over time.
- **Illness** – Newborn illness such as hepatitis, heart disease, jaundice, high fevers or a long-term chronic illness can cause discolorations on your child's teeth.
- **Medications** – Exposure to certain medications can discolor a child's teeth. Taking some medications (such as tetracycline) during pregnancy can affect your child's teeth. Iron or vitamin supplements can produce darkened spots on the teeth.

### 2. *How do I manage my child's discolored teeth?*

While discolored teeth in children are often not normal, they may not require treatment. It is important to understand the cause of discoloration. A visit to the dentist will help determine why the teeth are discolored and if any treatment is necessary.