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**Keep those
teeth bright**

Bright stuff

Five steps to a younger-looking smile

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For Metro Canada

From peptide-laced night creams to grey-masking hair dyes, there are countless ways to fight the first signs of aging.

But one area of the body usually gets overlooked: your smile. It's no surprise that a fondness for red wine, coffee and cigarettes can discolour your teeth, making them look older, says Dr. Charles Botbol, a Toronto-based dentist. But that's not the only factor: bad breath, worn-down teeth and lines around the mouth can also add years. We asked Botbol, Dr. Maryam Adibfar, a Toronto-based dentist, and Dr. Stephen Mulholland, a Toronto-based cosmetic surgeon, for their best advice on achieving a younger-looking smile.

Follow a good home care routine: "At least twice a day, brush your teeth and gums for two to two-and-a-half minutes," says Adibfar. An electric toothbrush with a built-in timer (such as Oral-B's Pulsar Sonic Toothbrush) can help you keep track of how long you're brushing; they're also better than regular toothbrushes at removing plaque and pre-

"Chronic bad breath, which is caused by poor oral hygiene, can make you seem older"

Dr. Charles Botbol, a Toronto-based dentist

venting stains from forming. Don't forget to floss at least once a day, too.

Freshen up: "Chronic bad breath, which is caused by poor oral hygiene, can make you seem older," says Botbol. A pre-brushing rinse like Listerine Extreme Whitening not only freshens breath by stopping bacteria in its tracks, it also gently lifts stains.

Whiten and brighten: Cut back on stain-producing foods and beverages and start using at-home or professional whitening treatments. "For most people, whitening strips are affordable and do the job," says Botbol. Professional treatments — including custom-made whitening trays or Zoom whitening (both start at \$300 and up) — perform deeper stain removal.

Get regular check-ups:

To keep your teeth and gums in tip-top shape, see your dentist at least once every six months for an examination and professional cleaning, says Adibfar.

Consider investing in cosmetic improvements: If your teeth require more serious repair work — they're misshapen, crooked or worn from grinding, for example — a cosmetic dentist may suggest ceramic reconstruction or contouring (reshaping existing teeth), says Botbol. But a younger-looking smile doesn't stop there. Hyaluronic acid fillers can restore fullness to the lips and fill in the nasolabial folds (laugh lines), says Mulholland. "Botox can also diminish the smaller lines and folds that run down from the corners of the mouth," he says.



Keep teeth looking white and bright by cutting back on stain-producing foods and beverages and start using at-home or professional whitening treatments.

Torching teeth?

• And you thought the dental drill was bad! Can you imagine a tiny blowtorch blasting away bacteria in your mouth? Researchers in California have created a new tool to fight plaque that builds up inside the teeth. Said to be a cross between a light saber and mouth wash, this tiny, purple plasma blowtorch uses sonic micropulses to zap bacteria in hard-to-reach places deep inside the mouth. Inventors — from the University of Southern California schools of dentistry and engineering — say that the blowtorch technology will revolutionize many facets of medicine. The device has already been used in root canals.

CELIA MILNE/
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