TikTok Do-It-Yourself Videos Alarm Dentists

TikTok videos of users whitening, straightening and even filing their teeth prompt dentists to warn that these hacks can hurt oral health.

July 29, 2021 By Kate Ferguson

Videos posted on the popular app TikTok have been known to influence users to do almost anything. Now that includes encouraging them to try a number of dangerous do-it-yourself procedures to whiten, straighten and even file their teeth to improve the appearance of a smile.

An article on Newsweek.com spotlighted a TikToker who cleaned her teeth with a piece of Mr. Clean Magic Eraser sheet.

@thebentist

Did she really just say she uses a magic eraser to clean her teeth… ???? please don’t make this a trend ???? ##learnontiktok ##tiktokpartner ##teeth

♬ original sound - The Bentist

Another story on News.Yahoo.com concerned a young girl sharing her technique for closing gaps in her teeth with hair ties.

@thebentist

Please tell me rubber band braces aren’t becoming a thing again ???? ##learnontiktok ##tiktokpartner

##braces ##rubberbands

♬ original sound - The Bentist

Benjamin Winters, DDS, an orthodontist based in Plano, Texas, who is known as “thebentist” on TikTok and has 10.1 million followers, posted his reaction to the two TikTok videos.

“A Magic Eraser is actually made of melanine foam,” said Winters. “It’s basically foam that’s hard as glass and acts as a really abrasive sandpaper, meaning, yeah, your teeth are white because you scrubbed all the enamel off. So, in fact, no, don’t do this.”

In addition, findings from a 2016 study about DIY dentistry published in the World Journal of Clinical Cases found that elastics used to close gapped teeth or correct badly positioned chompers could “create unintended consequences.”

Many dental professionals warn that these DIY methods are a significant threat to oral health. The Mr. Clean Magic Eraser label states that the household cleaning product is not for use on skin or other parts of the body.

The news outlet Indy100.com published a story about TikTokers who filed their teeth down to pegs to prepare for work being done to enhance their smiles.

Emi Mawson, a dentist from Cornwall, England, posted a video on TikTok to warn people that a video showing a woman who filed her teeth to get them ready for smile-enhancing dental veneers misunderstood the dentistry procedure. “These are not veneer preparations. These are crown preparations, and there’s a big difference,” Mawson explained. “Once you file your teeth down to stumps, there’s no going back!”

@dentist_emi

Let’s talk about Katie Prices ‘veneers’. ##veneers ##dentist

♬ original sound - Dentist Emi

In 2018, the American Dental Association (ADA) launched a public awareness campaign to educate the public and discourage DIY dentistry of any kind.

“Depending on the oral health issue being addressed and the nature of the treatment, there may be risks for long-term issues, including jaw problems, abnormal bite, tooth decay and loss as well as gum disease,” the organization stated in a press release.

For more about dental issues, read “Good Oral Health: Questions and Answers About Mouthwash” and “More Than Half of Antibiotics Prescribed in Advance of Dental Procedures Aren’t Needed.”

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