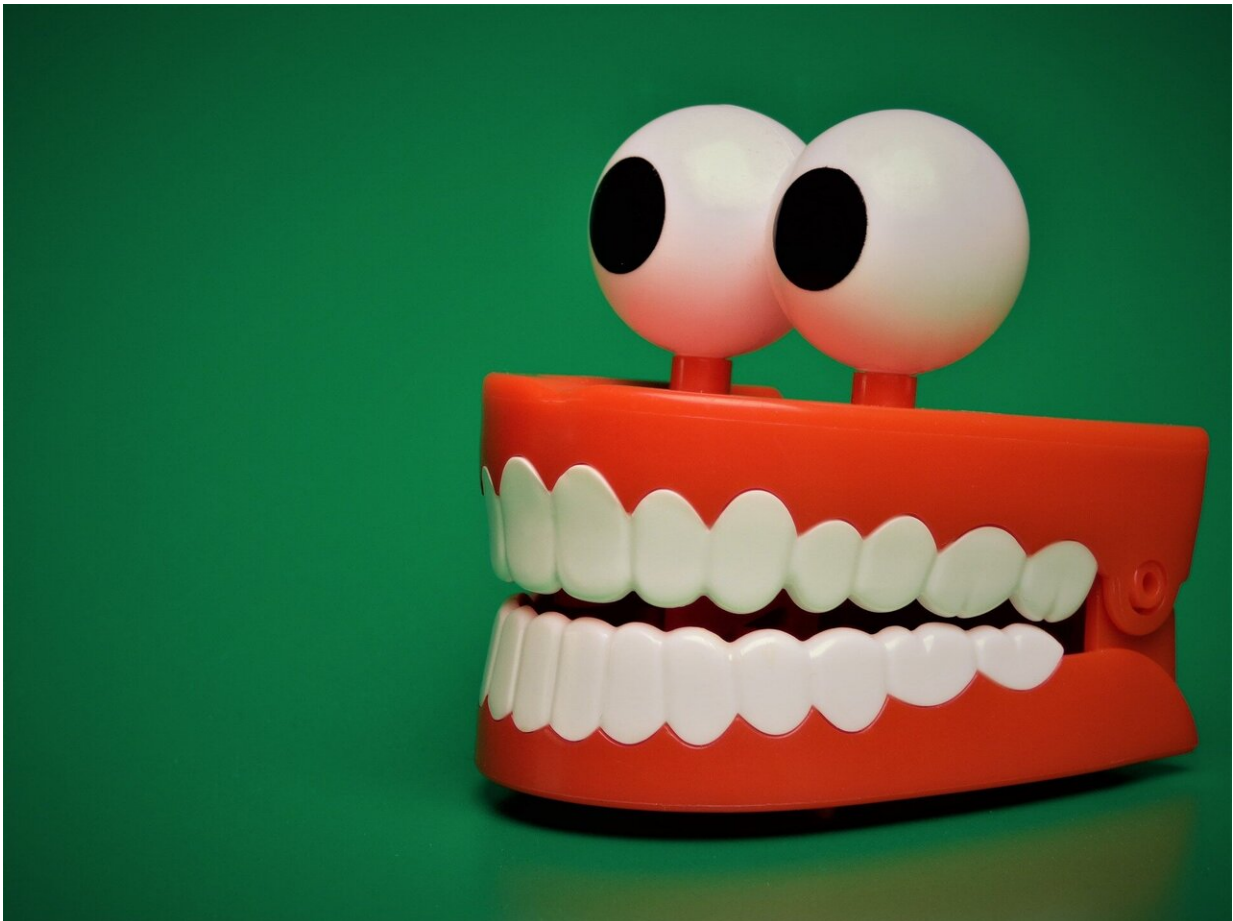


Five dental TikTok trends you probably shouldn't try at home

January 10 2024, by Arosha Weerakoon



Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

TikTok is full of videos that demonstrate DIY hacks, from up-cycling

tricks to cooking tips. Meanwhile, a growing number of TikTok videos offer tips to help you save money and time at the dentist. But do they deliver?

Here are five popular dental TikTok trends and why you might treat them with caution.

1. Home-made whitening solutions

Many TikTok videos provide tips to whiten teeth. These include tutorials on making your own whitening toothpaste using ingredients such as hydrogen peroxide, a common household bleaching agent, and baking soda ([sodium bicarbonate](#)).

In [this video](#), the influencer says, "And then you're going to pour in your hydrogen peroxide. There's really no measurement to this."

But hydrogen peroxide in [high doses](#) is poisonous if swallowed and can burn your gums, mouth and throat, and corrode your teeth.

High doses of hydrogen peroxide may infiltrate holes or microscopic cracks in your teeth to inflame or damage the [nerves and blood vessels in the teeth](#), which can cause pain and even nerve death. This is why dental practitioners [are bound by rules](#) when we offer whitening treatments.

Sodium bicarbonate and [hydrogen peroxide](#) are [among the components](#) in commercially available whitening toothpastes. While these commercial products [may be effective](#) at removing surface stains, their compositions are carefully curated to keep [your smile safe](#).

2. Oil pulling

[Oil pulling](#) involves swishing one tablespoon of sesame or [coconut oil](#) in your mouth for up to 20 minutes at a time. It has roots in Ayurvedic medicine, a traditional practice from the Indian subcontinent.

While oil pulling should be followed by brushing and flossing, I've had patients who believe oil pulling is a replacement for these practices.

There has been [some research](#) on the potential of oil pulling to treat gum disease or other diseases in the mouth. But overall, evidence that supports the effectiveness of oil pulling is of [low certainty](#).

For example, studies that test the effectiveness of oil pulling have been conducted on [school-aged children](#) and people with no dental problems and often measure dental plaque growth over a few days to a couple of weeks.

Chlorhexidine is an ingredient found in some commercially available mouthwashes. In one study, people who rinsed with chlorhexidine mouthwash (30 seconds twice daily) [developed less plaque](#) on their teeth compared to those who undertook oil pulling for eight to 10 minutes.

Ultimately, it's unlikely you will experience measurable gain to your [oral health](#) by adding oil pulling to your daily routine. If you're time-poor, you're better off focusing on [brushing your teeth and gums well](#) alongside flossing.

3. Using rubber bands to fix gaps

This TikTok influencer [shows his followers](#) he closed the gaps between his front teeth in a week using cheap clear rubber bands.

But this person may be one of the lucky few to successfully use bands to close a gap in his teeth without any mishaps. Front teeth are slippery and

taper near the gums into cone-shaped roots. This can cause bands to slide and disappear into the gums to surround the tooth roots, which can cause infections and pain.

If this happens, you may require surgery that involves cutting your gums to remove the bands. If the bands have caused an infection, you may [lose the affected teeth](#). So it's best to leave this sort of work to a dental professional trained in orthodontics.

4. Filing or cutting teeth to shape them

My teeth hurt just watching [this video](#).

Cutting or filing teeth unnecessarily can expose the second, more sensitive tooth layer, called [dentine](#), or potentially, the nerve and [blood vessels](#) inside the tooth. People undergoing this sort of procedure could experience anything from sensitive teeth through to a severe toothache that requires root canal treatment or tooth removal.

You may notice dentist drills spray water when cutting to protect your teeth from [extreme heat damage](#). The drill in [this video](#) is dry with no water used to cool the heat produced during cutting.

It may also not be sterile. We like to have everything [clean and sterile](#) to prevent contaminated instruments used on one patient from potentially spreading an infection to another person.

Importantly, once you cut or file your teeth away, it's gone forever. Unlike bone, hair or nails, our teeth [don't have the capacity to regrow](#).

5. DIY fillings

Many people [on TikTok](#) demonstrate filling cavities (holes) or replacing gaps between teeth with a material made from heated molded plastic beads. DIY fillings can cause a lot of issues—I've seen this in my clinic first hand.

While we may make it look simple in dental surgeries, the [science behind filling materials](#) and how we make them [stick to teeth](#) to fill cavities is sophisticated.

Filling a cavity with the kind of material made from these beads will be as effective as using sticky tape on sand. Not to mention the cavity will continue to grow bigger underneath the [untreated](#) "filled" teeth.

I know it's easy to say, "See a dentist about that cavity," or "Go to an orthodontist to fix that gap in your [teeth](#) you don't like," but it can be expensive actually to do these things. However, if you end up requiring treatment to fix the issues caused at home, it may cost you much more.

So what's the take-home message? Stick with the funny cat and dog videos on TikTok—they're safer for your smile.

This article is republished from [The Conversation](#) under a Creative Commons license. Read the [original article](#).

Provided by The Conversation

Citation: Five dental TikTok trends you probably shouldn't try at home (2024, January 10) retrieved 28 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2024-01-dental-tiktok-trends-shouldnt-home.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.