

Tooth-whitening – information sheet

In New Zealand, registered dentists can carry out tooth whitening within their scope of practice; and in some circumstances tooth whitening products can be applied by other registered oral health practitioners or, a non-registered tooth whitening practitioner (in some cases only under the supervision of a dentist)—it will depend on the percentage level of hydrogen peroxide.

The sale and application of tooth whitening products containing hydrogen peroxide (a hazardous substance) is governed by the [Environmental Protection Authority](#) (EPA)—the government agency responsible for regulating activities that affect New Zealand’s environment.

The EPA has authorised the supply of tooth whitening products to the public **and the commercial application of such products by different practitioners** (registered oral health practitioners and unregistered practitioners) according to the strength of hydrogen peroxide. There are different requirements for the sale and application of products containing more or less than 8% hydrogen peroxide. These rules are captured within the following two group standards issued by the EPA under the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996:

- [Dental Products \(Subsidiary Hazard\) Group Standard 2017](#) – see Part 4, Restrictions on tooth whitening products (between 7% and less than 8% hydrogen peroxide)
- [Dental Products \(Oxidising \[5.1.1\]\) Group Standard 2017](#) – see Part 4, Restrictions on tooth whitening products (8 – 12% hydrogen peroxide).

Restrictions on tooth-whitening products – supply and application

Hydrogen peroxide contained or released	Dentist	Registered oral health practitioner	Non-registered tooth-whitening practitioner
SUPPLY – who can sell the product to the public			
7 – 12%	✓	✓	✓ UNDER DENTIST SUPERVISION ONLY
>12%	✓	✓ UNDER DENTIST SUPERVISION ONLY	NO
APPLICATION PROCEDURE – who can apply the product			
7 – 12%	✓	✓	✓
>12%	✓	✓ UNDER DENTIST SUPERVISION ONLY	✓ UNDER DENTIST SUPERVISION ONLY

Note: “Supervision” is not defined in either group standard.

Concerns about tooth whitening practices can be raised with the EPA, Ministry of Health or the [New Zealand Cosmetic Teeth Whitening Association](#)—described on its website as a “Ministry of Health recognised self-regulating trade group devoted to protecting public safety”.