

the truth about tooth whitening

DON'T LEAVE THEM ON LONGER THAN YOU SHOULD.

*****For years, people thought that whitening products made teeth more sensitive. But a study in the *Journal of Endodontics* found that the active ingredient, carbamide peroxide, has no significant effect on enamel. "Those brightening toothpastes, strips and gels are safe if used correctly," says Mark Wolff, a professor at New York University's College of Dentistry. But leaving them on longer than recommended may raise your risk for gum infections. Before you whiten, consult your dentist.

medical q+a

Q My left breast is bigger than my right. Could the muscle over my heart be better developed and hence, cause my left breast to appear bigger?

Contrary to popular belief, the muscle over your heart does not increase the size of your breast, says Dr Tan Su-Ming, chief and senior consultant of surgery at Changi General Hospital. "And it has nothing to do with your choice of bra or enhancement products as this is a congenital problem," she says. There are two causes of breast asymmetry, according to Dr Tan. The first may be a benign or cancerous growth in the breast, and the second, merely individual variation. Depending on how great the difference in breast size is and whether it is causing backaches and social embarrassment, surgery may be considered. "There aren't any non-surgical solutions like creams or massages," she says.

Send your questions to Shape, Live Healthy Q+A, 82 Genting Lane, Level 7, Singapore 349567, or e-mail magshape@sph.com.sg.

Keep an eye on the amount of oils you are taking daily.

» how to choose your oil supplements

There are many brands of fish oil, evening primrose oil and cod liver oil on the market. How do you decide? Jaclyn Reutens, dietitian from Aptima Nutrition and Sports Consultants, dishes out these tips.

● fish oil

The oil is usually extracted from the entire fish. Salmon, tuna, herring and sardines may be used. Things you should look for on the bottle include the country of extraction (colder countries are preferred) and the amount of nutritional value. Check that the dosage does not exceed a maximum of three capsules.

● evening primrose oil

The best extraction method for evening primrose oil is cold-

pressing as it produces good quality oils. Also check that the *oenothera* flower is used as the source. Make sure that it contains at least 9 per cent gamma-linolenic acid and 70 per cent linoleic acid.

● cod liver oil

Cod liver oil is extracted by steaming the cod's liver, then pressing it to extract the oil. Cod from colder climates is the best. Look out for the dosage on the bottle; it should not advise consuming more than 1.5g of the oil daily.