

# BUYING GEMSTONES AND JEWELS



WITH CONFIDENCE

## TREATMENTS TO NATURAL DIAMONDS

Treatment or enhancements to natural diamonds with the goal of improving the diamond's overall appearance are common. These treatments are acceptable and have their place in the jewelry world, provided the consumer understands if a particular diamond was treated and exactly what enhancement/treatment was performed on the diamond and why. Treated diamonds are a way for consumers to own lovely jewelry at affordable prices.

**LASER DRILLING.** This treatment is done to reduce or eliminate dark “flaws” (inclusions) in natural diamonds. A laser beam is used to drill a narrow path to the flaw. This path looks like a fine white thread starting at the surface traveling to the inclusion. The effects of the laser treatment are permanent and the diamond does not need special care.

A laser-drilled diamond is an affordable alternative to paying more for a natural untreated diamond.

Remember that selling a laser-drilled diamond requires the seller to disclose and explain the treatment. Selling a laser drilled, treated diamond without proper disclosure is not an acceptable jewelry trade practice.

**FRACTURE FILLED.** This is another treatment to improve the appearance of a natural diamond. Surface cavities or fractures which reach or

break the surface of a diamond, are filled with a substance (oftentimes a type of epoxy or resin). This treatment does not remove the cavities or fractures but makes them appear less visible.

Fracture filling is not a permanent treatment since the heat of a jeweler's torch as well as ultrasonic cleaning can affect the filling used in the treatment. For example: the filling sometimes dries and therefore the cavities or fractures might reappear.

There are manufacturers of fracture filled diamonds offering a lifetime guaranty to restore the enhanced diamond to its initial beauty after it was first treated. Certain companies, through their retail vendors, offer this guaranty.

Check on line for "Enhanced Diamond" or "Fracture Filled Diamond" manufacturers. Always look for a Jewelers Vigilance Committee member and shop with confidence.

**CREATED MOISSANITE.** Moissanite, (chemical composition: silicon carbide), is a laboratory-created, near-colorless jewel distributed by Charles & Colvard, the exclusive source worldwide. While moissanite closely looks like a natural diamond, it is not a diamond, synthetic diamond, brand of diamond nor is it marketed as a diamond substitute. Rather moissanite is marketed as a unique jewel. However, some people do purchase it as a diamond alternative.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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For more information about buying gemstones and jewels with confidence, visit JVC's Web site: [www.jvclegal.org](http://www.jvclegal.org). or call JVC at: 212-997-2002.

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*Cover photo: Moissanite jewelry images courtesy of Charles & Colvard.*

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## KNOW WHAT YOU'RE BUYING

**BUYING A DIAMOND** is an exciting process but can also be very confusing. Scientific and technological advances in the jewelry industry have made it possible for synthetic diamonds to be manufactured and laboratory-created (made by man). There are even some very good imitations – just know what you are buying.

**WHAT IS A DIAMOND?** A diamond is composed of pure carbon crystallized and is the hardest substance known. Only Mother Nature can make a natural diamond. A natural diamond is identified using only the single word, “diamond”.

**SYNTHETIC DIAMONDS ALSO KNOWN AS LABORATORY (LAB) CREATED DIAMONDS.** Synthetic diamonds are NOT imitation diamonds. Synthetic means the product is made by man, in a laboratory, using the same chemical substance (pure carbon) found in natural diamonds. A synthetic diamond has the same physical, chemical and optical properties as a natural diamond. It's cut like a natural diamond but a synthetic diamond is created by man, not by Mother Nature.

Synthetic/Lab Created diamonds are less expensive than their natural counterparts.



## DON'T BE FOOLED BY LOOK-ALIKES OR IMITATIONS

There are many varieties of diamond look-alikes or diamond imitations. These products are not diamonds. If you decide to buy a diamond simulant or a stone that closely resembles a natural diamond, but the stone is not a diamond, be sure you know what you are buying. It's easy to be fooled.

**SIMULANT, DIAMOND SIMULANT OR SIMULATED STONE ARE IMITATIONS.** A simulant or simulated stone IS NOT a diamond but rather an imitation man-made product that resembles a diamond. A diamond imitation should not be confused with a synthetic diamond which possesses essentially the same physical, chemical and optical properties of a natural diamond. An imitation or diamond simulant can be made of



glass, plastic or some other compound such as zirconia oxide, better known as CZ or cubic zirconia. Simulated/imitation stones are made by man and are usually very inexpensive to manufacture. Simulated/imitation stones should not be confused with synthetic diamonds.

Be aware that sellers of imitation diamonds may use names that confuse consumers into believing that they are natural diamonds and not imitations. Remember if a stone is advertised as a diamond simulant or diamond alternative, it IS NOT a natural diamond nor is it a synthetic diamond. It is an imitation.

Be sure to ask if the stone you are buying is a natural diamond. Remember only a natural diamond can be identified using only the word “Diamond”, no other description is needed.



Be wary when you see a name or word before or after the word “diamond”. Example: Royal Diamond, Diamond Extraordinaire, etc. Question the true identity of the stone. Ask the question, “IS IT A NATURAL DIAMOND?” The answer is a simple yes or no.

“THE SAME AS” OR “JUST LIKE.” Don’t be fooled into believing that one product is necessarily the same as or just like another. Natural diamonds are different than synthetic diamonds and diamond simulants such as CZ. Remember that simulants such as CZ are not diamonds. While these products offer consumers options, it’s so important to know what you’re buying—ask questions and get the facts in writing.

*Above photos: Diamond jewelry images courtesy of Diamond Council of America*