

TEETH WHITENING



What is teeth whitening?

Tooth whitening is a highly effective, simple method to lighten the colour of your natural teeth and help remove staining. It does not change the colour of dental work such as fillings, crowns, veneers, bridgework and implants.

Does teeth whitening harm my teeth or gums?

No. Safety studies have shown that whitening teeth with the dentist-prescribed home technique is perfectly safe. However your dentist will firstly do a check up to ensure that your teeth and gums are healthy prior to you embarking on your whitening journey. More damage occurs by drinking a can of fizzy soda!

What are the side effects?

- **Tooth sensitivity and tingling** – this is to be expected during your treatment, and we recommend using Colgate Sensitive prior to starting your treatment and throughout your whitening journey. Sometimes you may need an over-the-counter painkiller to help settle any symptoms. If the sensitivity is too bad, then stop whitening and call us.
- **Gum irritation** – the whitening gel can irritate the gums leaving white marks on them. These marks may be a bit sore but are totally harmless and usually disappear after you have finished whitening and cause no long-term damage. Using some Bonjela and rinsing with warm salt water can help any gum irritation.

Will I be happy with the result?

We hope so, but please note that not every patient responds the same. We hope the result meets your expectations, but unfortunately outcomes can be unpredictable. Most people get a good result, but a small minority do not notice much difference. It is also important to note that each tooth is not a uniform colour, so the area closer to the gum will often be the darkest part of the tooth and take longer to lighten than the biting edge.

There are certain circumstances that also require some special consideration:

- The neck of the tooth (nearest the gum) is darker and will always take longer to whiten.
- White flecks in your teeth will initially appear whiter, and then the rest of the tooth will catch up.
- Brown patches on the teeth may not whiten sufficiently and may require further treatment.
- Antibiotic-stained teeth will take longer to whiten due to the nature of the staining.

Will I need to whiten my teeth again?

Teeth naturally darken as we get older. This will vary from person to person and whitening is less likely to last as long if you smoke or eat or drink products that can stain your teeth, such as tea and coffee. Most people top-up their whitening buying extra gels as required.

What are the other options?

- **Whitening toothpastes** – these do not actually affect the colour of your teeth, but can remove some stains since they are abrasive.
- **Professional stain removal** – this does not affect the colour of your teeth but gently removes surface stains.
- **Veneers** – by covering over your teeth you can pick the colour and shape you want. This is a much more complex and destructive procedure than whitening.

Tooth whitening instructions



Brush and floss your teeth before whitening to remove any plaque.



Squeeze a match-head size amount of gel into the outer surface of each tooth on your tray (as demonstrated previously).



Insert the tray over your teeth and press down gently to ensure the gel has spread. Any excess gel can be wiped off with a cotton bud .



After you have worn your trays, brush your teeth and trays to remove any gel and wash your trays under cold water only.

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How long do I have to wear my trays for?

Ideally overnight is best, however if you find this difficult or your teeth are sensitive you can modify your wear schedule. If you choose to wear your trays during the day, this should be for 2-3 hours each time and there should be no eating or drinking for one hour either side of that.

If your teeth get sensitive, wear the trays during the day instead of overnight, and they can even be alternated so upper and lower trays are done on separate days. Please note that this will take longer to whiten. In this scenario, you can also place some of the Colgate Sensitive toothpaste into the tray overnight to cover the sensitive teeth.

To achieve your whitening result, whiten for at least two weeks. Once you are satisfied with the colour of your teeth whiten for three more days to stabilise the colour. Should you want them whiter, continue whitening until you are happy. Note that as the teeth get whiter, further whitening takes longer to achieve.

What special considerations do I need to make during whitening?

For effective results:

- Do not eat, drink or smoke with the trays and gels in your mouth (water is allowed).
- Avoid coloured foods and drinks during whitening, e.g. tea, coffee, red wine, tomato sauces, turmeric etc.
- Drink any coloured beverages through a straw.
- Avoid smoking if possible. Do not smoke immediately on removing your trays - wait for at least two hours.
- Use the gels at room temperature.
- Try not to skip whitening days, as it will prolong the whitening process.
- Silver fillings may stain your trays - this is normal so do not be concerned.

How do I look after my trays?

Keep your trays clean by cleaning them after each use. You can use an ultrasonic retainer cleaner and cleaning tablets to keep your trays fresh. Make sure you only use cold water to clean your trays, as hot water will distort them. Once your trays have been cleaned, allow them to dry completely before sealing them in the case. Remember to also wash your case regularly. Keep them away from pets, as they seem to love chewing on them. Looking after your trays will keep them in working order for use in the future for top ups.

How often do I need to whiten again?

Once you have whitened and you are happy with the colour, the following maintenance regime is recommended.

Year 1 – 1-2 nights of whitening every two months.

Year 2 – 1-2 nights of whitening every four months.

Year 3 and beyond – 2-3 nights of whitening every 6 months.

What do I do with my gels?

Once your initial course of whitening has been completed any leftover gels can be stored in the fridge and can be used for your maintenance schedule. When you use them for your maintenance, bring them to room temperature before using them.

Patient's Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____