



Instructions for Whitening

Candidates for Whitening: Just about anyone is a candidate for teeth whitening. However, the following cases should be considered:

- People with dark yellow or yellow-brown teeth tend to whiten better than people with gray or bluish-gray teeth.
- Multi-colored teeth, especially due to tetracycline, do not whiten very well.
- People with significant periodontal disease may not be good candidates.
- If you are pregnant, obtain permission from your obstetrician before trying the whitening procedure.
- People with minimal discoloration (teeth that are already very white) may not see a substantial degree of whitening.
- Teeth with many fillings, cavities, chips, etc. are usually best treated by bonding, porcelain veneers or porcelain crowns. Any current restoration you have such as fillings, porcelain crowns, onlays, and inlays cannot be whitened.

In-Office Whitening: This process can be done in one visit or may require multiple visits depending on how your teeth respond to the whitening gel. Each appointment takes approximately one to two hours (1/2-1 hr prep and 1 hr treatment). The advantages of in-office whitening includes us doing all the work for you and in less total time than you would spend at home whitening your teeth. The disadvantages include the normal inconveniences of any dental treatment, such as, having to keep your mouth open for the duration of the appointment and the possibility of increased costs as compared to home whitening.

Take-Home Whitening: This process, which can be done anywhere and anytime, involves wearing a custom made whitening tray (looks like a thin, transparent mouth guard) filled with a mild whitening agent for optimal results. You should wear the gel-filled tray from 45 minutes per day to overnight depending on the strength of the whitening agent. Treatment time depends on the degree of whitening desired. The advantages of home whitening include performing the treatment when it is convenient for you with lower costs. The disadvantage to home whitening is that the success of the treatment is dependent on your commitment to wearing the whitening tray consistently for the prescribed period of time.

Care and Storage of Trays

The trays should always fit up against the gum tissue. If not, they may have distorted. To prevent distortion of trays:

- **NEVER** clean or rinse with **HOT** water.
- Always store on the stone models when possible.
- Never store near any heat source.
- Keep the models—if the trays are lost or damaged it will be much simpler, quicker, and less costly to have new ones made.

Filling the Tray

It will probably take some trial and error for you to learn how much solution (gel) to use in the trays.

- Use enough gel so that no air bubbles are evident under the tray but little or no gel oozes out of the tray.
- In most cases, do not fill gel back around the molar teeth.

The Gel (Swallowing the excess gel is not harmful.)

- If used properly, you will have 10 days worth of gel.
- The gel has a long shelf life (2-3 years) if refrigerated.

Whitening Options

Determine what routine works best for you and stick with it. If you skip a day it takes two to make it up, and if you don't do **at least** 30-45 minutes for five consecutive days, you may not see any results.

- Best results are usually achieved by whitening in the evening. After dinner, brush and floss and place the tray for 30-45 min, clean it out and replace it just before you go to sleep. With this regimen, most people see noticeable results in 5-7 days.
- Continue until you are satisfied with the results. Some people continue after the 10-day supply. You will usually continue to notice results (for up to six weeks in most cases).
- Do not eat, drink, or smoke while wearing your custom tray.
- Do not use any household or other whitening product to whiten your teeth.

Sensitivity

Occasionally, some people will experience some cold sensitivity during whitening (1 in 20). Usually this will stop a few days after discontinuing the whitening. Rarely, some sensitivity may persist. There are several ways of handling this:

- Avoid citrus foods & juices. These may cause irritation. Also avoid hot and cold extremes.
- Stop for a few days, until the sensitivity subsides, then try again. Usually after this you can resume, although you may have to do this several times.
- You may also try using toothpaste for sensitive teeth (i.e. Sensodyne) to eliminate the problem.
- You may need to reduce the wear to 1x/day, not at night.
- If these do not work, we may find a less concentrated whitening gel will help.
- Rarely, you may have to discontinue treatment completely.

Results

Most people are very pleased with the results. These are a few things to keep in mind:

- Save the shade guide to help you determine if you may need to touch up the whitening.
- Some yellowing along the gum line of some teeth is due to the (yellow) dentin showing through a thin enamel layer. The procedure may not completely eliminate this in some cases.
- A thin enamel layer may also account for a grayish appearance on the edges of your teeth. This is a natural translucency and whitening will not eliminate this, although some other cosmetic procedures may.
- The unused gel can be stored and used for touch-up at any time.
- If you avoid food and drinks that stain (red wine, tea, tobacco, coffee) again, you should probably expect 4-6 years before you need to touch-up. Some people just do 3 or 4 days every six months. You can best determine what works for you.
- Especially avoid any colored liquids or foods during the whitening process.
- We usually have the gel in stock just call the office. Refill kits are approximately \$30 for a 10-day supply.