

## Home Teeth Whitening Frequently Asked Questions

### Who should use home teeth whitening?

Generally, anyone with healthy gums and teeth that are looking to brighten up their smile can benefit from the professional teeth whitening system. It has been shown to be highly effective at removing stains from teeth, including tobacco, coffee, tea, tetracycline, and various other tooth stains. Not all types of staining or discolouration respond well to tooth whitening. Results on teeth which are very dark or have patchy staining may be less predictable. Teeth which are worn or eroded or which have been restored with large white fillings may also be unsuitable.

### Is teeth whitening bad for your teeth?

Studies of teeth whitening products using carbamide peroxide showed no effect on the hardness or mineral content of a tooth's enamel surface. Professional teeth whitening does not cause permanent damage to the enamel on your teeth, and is considered harmless by most dental health professionals. You may have some sensitivity of your teeth during whitening but this is normal and usually stops when you finish your treatment

### What does the treatment involve?

Digital Dental impressions of your teeth are taken at the surgery and custom-made soft acrylic trays are produced which fit snugly over your teeth. A small amount of whitening gel is placed in the tray and worn by the patient at home, usually through the night, according to instructions, for a period of two to three weeks. Please note that to achieve the desired shade you may need to follow the procedure for an extended period and purchase additional syringes of whitening gel.

### Does the whitening system work on Dentures, Crowns, Bridges or Veneers?

The process is designed to enhance the natural whiteness of the enamel. Existing restorations such as tooth-coloured fillings, dentures, crowns, bonding, veneers, and bridges do not lighten. This means that any pre-existing dental work may need to be replaced to match the new tooth shade achieved in the natural teeth. You may think about only applying the whitening gel to your own natural teeth when you are loading the bleaching tray.

### How will my teeth feel during the process?

Sensitivity of the teeth is the most common side effect of bleaching. This usually occurs around the necks of the teeth where the gum has receded. A desensitising agent is contained in the whitening gel to reduce sensitivity as much as possible. You may use over the counter desensitising toothpastes during the whitening process.

### How long do the teeth whitening effects last?

Teeth whitening is not permanent. People who expose their teeth to foods and beverages that cause staining may see the whiteness start to fade in as little as one month. Those who avoid foods and beverages that stain may be able to wait one year or longer before another whitening treatment or touch-up is needed.

### How many shades whiter can I expect my teeth to get?

The amount of whitening varies from client to client and cannot be predicted or guaranteed; but in general use, teeth may lighten anywhere from 6 to 12 shades on the whitening shade guide. The results depend greatly on how discoloured the teeth were originally. Yellow or brown teeth, surface stains, and uniformly



darkened teeth are easiest to whiten. Additional whitening treatments may be needed in order to achieve the desired shade, especially with heavily stained teeth.

### How long does the treatment take?

Once we have given you your whitening trays and gel, we will make you a review appointment two or three weeks later to confirm your new smile. The time to whiten your teeth depends on the extent and type of staining at the beginning. At the review appointment you may discuss with the dentist further whitening or specific whitening for teeth which were more stained at the beginning of your treatment. This may require further whitening. It is common for patients to top up their whitening every few months or for a special occasion. If you have had a tooth whitening kit provided by us, then you may purchase additional tubes from the practice.

### How can I make my results last longer?

There are a number of steps that you can take to help retain your tooth whitening results. First, avoid eating or drinking any items that can stain your teeth, such as coffee, tea, soda, berries, and anything tomato-based. If you do choose to eat and drink these items, be sure to rinse your mouth or brush your teeth afterward. Finally, keeping up with twice-daily tooth brushing and dental cleanings at the dentist can help prevent stains from building up on your teeth.

You are also able to purchase additional whitening gel tubes from the practice. Please see the answer to 'How do I purchase additional whitening gel syringes?' below.

### What about the rest of my mouth?

You should be aware that the colour of any white fillings or porcelain crown and bridgework you may have will remain unchanged through the whitening process. This is a very important consideration that needs to be addressed before whitening. You may need to consider renewing these restorations to match the new colour of your natural teeth, once the whitening process has been completed.

### Why is professional whitening better than other options?

The greatest benefit that you'll gain by seeing a dentist for tooth whitening is speed. Unlike over-the-counter kits, professional whitening uses a stronger formula that can provide you with a noticeably whiter smile in a single treatment. At-home kits that you can pick up at the drugstore often take a week or longer to provide noticeable results.

### How can I purchase additional whitening gel syringes?

Please call the practice during opening hours to arrange a collection date, or visit us and purchase these at reception. Please note, we always advise patients to call us first to ensure we have sufficient syringes in stock.