

WHITENING INFORMATION/ INFORMED CONSENT

GENERAL INFORMATION

Whitening is a procedure, which is designed to lighten the color of your teeth. When done properly, whitening will not harm your teeth or gums. Significant lightening can be achieved in the vast majority of cases, but the RESULTS CANNOT BE GUARANTEED. Whitening, like any other treatment, has some inherent risks and limitations. These are seldom serious enough to discourage you from having your teeth whitened, but should be considered in making a decision to have treatment. In addition, there are variables, such as the type of discoloration that affects your teeth, the degree to which you follow our instructions, the overall condition of your teeth, etc., that can affect the outcome of treatment.

CANDIDATES FOR WHITENING

Just about anyone is a candidate for whitening. However, people with dark yellow or yellow-brown teeth tend to whiten better than people with gray or bluish-gray teeth. Multi-colored teeth, especially if stained due to tetracycline, do not whiten very well. In addition, teeth with many fillings, cavities, chips, etc., are usually best treated by bonding, porcelain veneers or porcelain crowns.

TYPES OF WHITENING

POWER WHITENING (In Office). This process can be done in one visit. The appointment takes about one hour. The whitening agent is applied and allowed to penetrate into your teeth to whiten them. A high intensity Plasma Arc Lamp is used to further activate the whitening agent. Power whitening is often considered to be a “jump start” to shorten the length of time required to lighten. We will provide, as part of this option, upper and lower **anterior** whitening trays and a small tube of touch up whitening gel, should you wish to achieve a lighter shade at home.

The advantages of power whitening include our doing all the work for you in one visit. Less time and effort is required by you to achieve the desired results. The disadvantages include the normal inconvenience 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.

HOME WHITENING. This process involves wearing a custom-made whitening tray (looks like a thin, transparent nightguard) filled with a mild whitening gel. You would be required to wear the gel-filled tray 4-8 hours per day for about two weeks. The trays are fabricated from impressions taken of your teeth during your first visit. Most patients prefer to wear the trays during the night when sleeping. We check your progress usually once a week during the period you are whitening.

The advantages of home whitening include your ability to decide when it is convenient for you and possibly the lower fee. The disadvantages include the bother of having to wear the whitening tray and the entire result depending on your routinely using the gel.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

WEARING YOUR BLEACHING TRAY. If you choose home whitening, it will only be effective if you conscientiously wear the whitening tray for the prescribed number of hours per day. Compliance is the most important factor in achieving a successful result.

COMMUNICATION. If you experience any severe discomfort or other problems, contact us immediately.

KEEPING YOUR APPOINTMENTS. We prefer to monitor patients and the progress of their whitening, at one and two week intervals, if possible.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

TOOTH SENSITIVITY. During the first 24 hours following whitening, many patients experience sensitivity. This sensitivity is usually mild if your teeth are not normally sensitive. With power whitening, this sensitivity will usually subside in 1-2 days. With home bleaching, it may be necessary for you to reduce the number of hours you are wearing the bleaching tray or stop using it for a short time to resolve the sensitivity. However, if your teeth are normally sensitive, whitening may make your teeth much more sensitive for an extended period of time. Under these circumstances, you may choose to delay whitening until we are able to complete desensitization procedures. If your teeth are sensitive after whitening, a mild analgesic such as Tylenol or Advil will usually be effective to make you more comfortable until your teeth return to normal.

GUM IRRITATION. Whitening can cause temporary inflammation of your gums. With power whitening, this is the result of very small amounts of gel that may have contacted your gum tissue. A burning sensation in your gums may also occur. This is a minor problem and will resolve by itself in a few days. With home whitening, irritation can result from using the whitening tray too many hours when you first start whitening, or using the whitening tray too many hours in a row without a break. It may be necessary for you to reduce the number of hours you are wearing the tray or stop using it for a short time to resolve these gum problems.

SORE THROAT. If you overload a whitening tray with whitening gel, the excess can go down your throat and cause soreness. This soreness will also resolve in several days, assuming you spit out the excess material instead of swallowing it.

LEAKING FILLINGS OR CAVITIES. Most whitening is indicated for the outside of the teeth (unless you already had a root canal). However, if you have any fillings that are leaking and allow the bleach to get into the inside of the teeth, damage to the nerves of the teeth could result. In this case, the fillings need to be redone prior to the whitening. In addition, open cavities can also allow the whitening agent to reach the nerves of the teeth. They should also be taken care of prior to whitening.

CERVICAL ABRASION/EROSION. These conditions affect the roots of the teeth when gums recede. They are grooves, notches or depressions where the teeth meet the gums that look darker than the rest of the teeth. They look darker because there is no enamel in these areas. Even if these areas are not sensitive, gel can potentially penetrate the teeth and damage the nerves. These areas should not be whitened, but should be filled after the whitening is completed.

ROOT RESORPTION. This is a condition where the root of a tooth starts to dissolve; either forms the inside or the outside. Although the cause of the resorption has not been determined, studies have shown that its incidence is higher in teeth that have a root canal and then are internally bleached.

EFFECT ON FILLINGS. Even though open cavities should be filled or badly leaking fillings should be refilled prior to whitening, home whitening can cause tooth-colored fillings to become softer and may make them more susceptible to staining. Therefore, you should be prepared to have any fillings in your front teeth replaced after whitening. In addition, since whitening will normally lighten teeth, but not fillings or crowns, you may need to have your fillings replaced anyway, so that will match your newly whitened teeth.

COMPLETION OF TREATMENT

LEVEL OF LIGHTENING. There is no totally reliable way to predict how light your teeth will whiten. With power whitening, additional treatments at home may be necessary to significantly whiten your teeth. With home whitening, two to three weeks of using the whitening tray daily for 2-8 hours will give you much lighter teeth. Additional whitening may provide slightly more lightening, but increased side effects may occur. We do not recommend home whitening for more than four weeks.

RELAPSE. Following completion of whitening, there may be a gradual relapse of the teeth back to their original color. To reverse this process, whitening touchup treatments may be necessary after months or years. With home whitening, you may choose to purchase additional tubes of touch-up gel, and you may wear your whitening tray once a month to keep relapse from occurring at all.

I have read and understand the proceeding. The above information has been explained to me and I have had the opportunity to ask questions. I consent to this treatment.

(Patient Signature)

(Print name)

(Witness Signature)

(Print name)

(Date)

