

Home Tooth whitening bleaching treatment

Is everyone suitable?

Your dentist will inform you whether you are a suitable candidate for tooth-whitening. Many individuals do qualify for treatment, but there will be a small proportion who may not be suitable. If you are not a suitable candidate for treatment your dentist will advise you of his or her findings and may discuss other more suitable options.

How long should I wear the trays for? What results can I realistically expect?

This depends on the amount of lightening that you desire and the original shade of the teeth. Many patients experience a significant level of whitening however, we cannot reliably predict how many shades lighter your teeth will become following treatment. If your teeth are quite dark or very yellow/grey/tetracycline stained it will take longer to bleach the teeth. If you are not experiencing any sensitivity you may wear the trays for at least 2 hours and even sleep with the trays in your mouth. It is very important to remove all the excess material around the gums or the palate prior to sleeping with the trays.

Temporary inflammation of your gums and other soft tissues in the mouth can occur during treatment. Should you experience sensitivity following treatment, rinsing the mouth with warm salted water can help. The effect of any sensitivity usually subsides within 2 hours.

The darker your teeth, the longer your teeth will take to get lighter. Tetracycline stained teeth can take 6 months or up to one year to lighten, equally some teeth can whiten after one month. Yellow or yellow-brown teeth tend to whiten better than grey or grey-brown teeth and some teeth stained by antibiotic treatment or fluoride may not respond to whitening in the same way.

If you cannot wear the trays for a few days because of your hectic schedule, it does not matter. Bleach your teeth according to your own schedule. Some people put the trays in after dinner and wear them for the first 2 hours while watching TV or doing the dishes. Then if everything is fine they replenish the trays and sleep with them in.

What do I do if I have any sensitivity?

Sensitivity of teeth is the most common side effect of home bleaching. In fact many patients suffer from sensitive teeth any way. This occurs usually around the necks of the teeth where the gums have receded. We recommend the use of "Tooth Mousse" 1 week prior to starting bleaching your teeth. If you are experiencing any sensitivity you should stop bleaching your teeth for a few days and apply the tooth mousse. You can resume bleaching after about 3 days. If the teeth become ultra sensitive you can place a sensitive toothpaste or tooth mousse into the bleaching trays for an hour a day. We recommend Boots own sensitive toothpaste. That will usually stop the sensitivity. Alternatively you can rub the sensitising toothpaste into the gum margins with your finger 5 times per day for a few days. If you are at all concerned, please call your dentist.

What happens if the teeth do not bleach evenly?

If the teeth have white spots on them before bleaching, these spots will appear whiter during the first few days, however the contrast between the spots and the rest of the tooth will be less and eventually they may not be noticeable. Sometimes the dentist can do a special procedure called Microabrasion for you where the white spots can be more permanently removed. Ask your dentist about the procedure if you are concerned about this.

You may notice new white spots occurring on the teeth while you are undertaking the bleaching treatment. These white spots were already present on the teeth before bleaching. As the teeth become lighter they become more visible. As the whole tooth itself becomes lighter these spots should fade. You may notice these white spots immediately after a bleaching session of in the morning if you have been wearing the trays for the whole night.

Some teeth may appear banded with lighter/whiter areas. Again this banding is originally present on the tooth. As the tooth is dark these bandings are not obvious. As the tooth becomes lighter, the lighter parts of the tooth will lighten first followed by the darker banded area. After a week or so these should not be noticeable any more.

Is there an alternative to Home tooth whitening?

There are alternative whitening treatments available. We also offer an advanced home kit which involves taking an impression of your teeth so the whitening trays can be made to fit the shape and contour of your own teeth. You can re-use the trays for future top-up treatment by simply purchasing the whitening gel under the prescription of your dentist. You may want whitening fast. In this case we can offer you BriteSmile tooth whitening. BriteSmile is an in-surgery treatment lasting just over one hour. Results in all cases are similar. Please ask your dentist for more details about alternative treatments.

You may also opt for crowns, bridges and veneers if tooth whitening is not a suitable option for you.

How will my teeth feel?

Normally the teeth feel very clean after the bleaching procedure. The bleaching materials also have an indirect effect on the gums in helping them to heal or improving the health of the gums. This is how the technique was invented as it was first used to heal gum irritation during orthodontic treatment.

Fillings and other restorations

If you have white fillings, crowns or veneers in the front teeth that match the existing shade of your teeth before you bleach your teeth, they may not match the teeth afterwards. This is because your teeth can lighten, but the fillings do not. When the desired colour has been achieved, the dentist can replace these fillings with a lighter shade of filling material to match the new shade of your teeth. Normally the dentist will wait at least 2 weeks before changing the fillings.

How long does the bleaching last? Will I have to bleach my teeth again?

Normally the new white colour of your teeth keeps quite well. There is a slight regression of the result up to 48 hours after treatment. We advise you to modify your diet during the bleaching period taking care not to drink or eat foods likely to cause staining, such as coffee, tea, red wine and spicy foods. The effect is dependent on what has caused the teeth to discolour in the first place. If you drink lots of coffee, red wine and cola drinks, the effect may darken slightly. Some patients do a top up treatment after 6 months others after 3 - 4 years but some patients do not need to. To help maintain the whiteness a good oral hygiene regime with regular attendance with your dental hygienist is a must.

Does Bleaching harm the teeth or gums?

Safety studies have shown that bleaching teeth using the dentist prescribed home bleaching technique is perfectly safe on the teeth, cheeks, gums and tissue of the mouth. Bleaching the

teeth with the dentist prescribed kits is equivalent to drinking one can of fizzy drink. The bleaching material has a pH, which is neutral.

There are problems with the bleaching kits that are purchased over the counter. Although they are inexpensive, they normally contain an acid rinse, which can damage the teeth or thin down the enamel, and this can be extremely harmful to the teeth. There was a case where a patient purchased the kit over the counter, bleached the teeth. The teeth went darker and the patient continued over using the treatment. This was because the acid rinse had worn the enamel away and the darker shade was exposed dentine.

It is not however advisable to bleach your teeth if you smoke. It is best to stop smoking for at least 3 weeks before commencing the bleaching procedure. Smoking causes the teeth to darken anyway and the effects will be diminished.