



# WHITENING

At The Practice we pride ourselves on ensuring our patients are well informed on their dental health and treatment options. This information sheet is aimed to give you general information and risks involved with procedures. Your dentist will be able to identify your specific risks and benefits. As always our providers will endeavour to manage any undesired outcomes for you and perform procedures with the highest level of safety and care for you.

## **WHAT IS TEETH WHITENING?**

Teeth can become discoloured for a number of reasons. Sometimes teeth develop with discolorations which can affect all or a few teeth. Whitening of individual teeth is best discussed at length with your dentist. Intrinsic factors include genetic discoloration, certain antibiotics used when young, root canal treatments, tooth grinding, trauma and certain enamel/dentine conditions.

More commonly, though, teeth can become darker due to diet and social habits, such as drinking caffeine, soft drink, red wine, or smoking. These factors can cause extrinsic staining.

Whitening of such teeth involves a carefully formulated bleaching system, which is applied to your teeth. This can be in the form of take-home treatment where you fill your custom-made whitening trays with whitening gel and place them over the teeth when at home. Alternatively, teeth can be professionally whitened in dental surgeries using a more concentrated gel and a powerful whitening light.

## **AM I A GOOD CANDIDATE?**

Your dentist will have carefully examined your mouth and documented their assessment findings. It is recommended to have a comprehensive examination prior to whitening. While most patients are good candidates for whitening, there are some exceptions. If you have gum disease or dental decay, whitening isn't an advisable option. If the whitening gel penetrates the inside of the tooth, this can cause significant pain and results in the need of further dental treatment. Any diseased or broken teeth will need to be treated before whitening can be considered.

If your teeth are already light, you may not notice a dramatic change. If your teeth are yellow/brown, you are likely to get better results than if your teeth are grey/bluish. Teeth with multiple discolorations, stripes or spots due to medications or fluorosis do not usually whiten as well and may need multiple treatments. Sometimes, such teeth do not respond at all to the whitening gel. Unfortunately, we are not able to guarantee how white your teeth may become.

## **IS TEETH WHITENING SUITABLE FOR EVERYONE?**

In-surgery whitening treatments use a gel activated by a light. This is not recommended during pregnancy or if you are breastfeeding. If you're light-sensitive, receiving PUVA (Porsalen + UVA radiation) or other photochemo-therapeutic drugs/treatments, have melanoma, diabetes or heart conditions, teeth whitening may not be a safe option for you.

It is critical you inform your dentist of any medical issues or medicines you're taking so they can determine whether this applies to you.

## **IS TEETH WHITENING PERMANENT?**

Over time your teeth will slowly discolour again, this is very gradual but can be accelerated by exposing the teeth to staining agents such as coffee, tea, red wine and smoking. Again, habits like



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clenching or grinding could affect the long-term result. A home whitening kit can be used regularly under guidance of your dentist to help maintain the colour of your teeth. You should make sure you brush and floss your teeth before using the whitening gel to get the best results you can.

## **WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT AFTER TREATMENT?**

It is common for your teeth to feel sensitive during and after treatment. This generally resolves within 12-24 hours, but you may need to take over-the-counter pain medication.

During the treatment, your gums may be exposed to the whitening gel. This can cause minor chemical burns, temporary gum inflammation or white spots on the gums. This will usually resolve spontaneously within a few hours, but, if it persists, you should contact your dentist for advice. This is why it is important to have your whitening managed by a dental professional to reduce the risk of unwanted outcomes.

If you have any restorations, crowns or veneers on your teeth, the gel will not whiten these. Whitening treatment only affects the natural tooth structure. It is possible to have existing dental restorations replaced in a lighter shade to match your whitened teeth. It is important to not overfill your tray(s), you are most likely going to cause damage to the tissues surrounding the teeth. Your dentist will recommend how much gel to use and how often to use it.

Any dental procedures carry small risks, and your dentist will explain any specific risks which may apply to you. If you are using take home whitening, the trays you have been given can easily distort if they are placed near a heat source. You should store your trays in a cool place to minimise this risk; if the trays distort, you will need new ones at your own cost. The gel is also sensitive to heat and should be stored in a cool, dry environment so it remains stable and suitable for use.

As teeth can become sensitive during whitening, you should avoid foods and juices that are acidic and use remineralising and desensitising products recommended by your dentist.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ consent to teeth whitening using:

In-surgery treatment

Take-home whitening

I have read (or had read to me) the contents including the benefits, risks, limitations and inconveniences. I am aware of the general risks of treatment as listed on the information sheet. I have also been informed of the specific risks to me, these include:

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I have had the opportunity to ask my dentist questions and discuss my concerns. I understand the expected outcomes. My dentist has discussed other treatment options and I have received a quotation for the estimated cost of my treatment.

I consent to the taking of photographs, study models, and x-rays (before, during, and after treatment) to assist in the planning and to progress objectives (if required).

Patient/Legal guardians

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dentist Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_