



## Teeth Whitening

### General Information

Tooth whitening is designed to lighten the color of your teeth. Significant whitening can be achieved in many cases, but the results cannot be guaranteed. When done properly, the whitening will not harm your teeth or gums. However, like any other treatment, it has some inherent risks and limitations. These are seldom serious enough to discourage you from having your teeth whitened but should be considered. Almost anyone is a candidate for tooth 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 due to tetracycline staining, do not whiten very well. 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.

### Types of Tooth Whitening

#### *In-Office Whitening*

This process can usually be done in one visit. The appointment takes between 45 minutes to 1½ hours. The advantage of in-office whitening is that our staff are doing all the work for you and it is less total time than you would spend whitening your teeth at home. The disadvantages include the normal inconveniences of any dental treatment, such as having to come to our office to have the procedure done and having to keep your mouth open for the duration of the appointment, as well as temporary tooth sensitivity.

#### *Home Whitening*

This process, which can be done anywhere and anytime, involves wearing a custom-made whitening tray filled with a mild whitening agent. You should wear the gel-filled tray from 15-30 minutes per session, depending on the strength of the whitening agent (see included instructions for exact timing). Most people see a satisfactory result in approximately 2 weeks of daily whitening and should discontinue usage when satisfaction is achieved. The advantages of home whitening include performing the treatment when it is convenient for you. 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.

### Completion of Whitening

There is no totally reliable way to predict how light your teeth will whiten. With in office whitening, one session usually significantly whitens your teeth. Some patients require an additional session. With home whitening, it may take two to four weeks or longer of repeated applications to achieve the desired

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results. There are no guarantees as to the degree of whitening of your teeth. The amount of whiteness varies with patient.

### **Relapse**

Following completion of whitening, pigments found in food and drinks will re-stain your teeth, commonly called whitening relapse. You may use daily whitening toothpaste, which is available at your local drug store

### **Potential Problems:**

**Tooth Sensitivity** - During the first 24 hours following whitening, some patients experience transient sensitivity. This sensitivity is usually mild if your teeth are not normally sensitive. With in-office whitening, this sensitivity will usually subside in 1-2 days. With some whitening, it may be necessary for you to reduce the number of minutes or hours you are wearing the whitening trays or stop using them for several days to resolve the sensitivity. However, if your teeth are normally sensitive, whitening may make your teeth more sensitive for an extended period. Under these circumstances, you may choose to delay the whitening process 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 in making you more comfortable until your tooth sensitivity returns to normal. You can also place sensitive toothpaste in your whitening trays and wear the trays for a period of time directly after whitening.

**Gum Irritation** – This is the result of a small amount of solution coming into contact with the gums. This can cause temporary inflammation and white spots. A burning sensation on your gums may also occur. This should resolve itself between a few hours to a few days. You may also experience burning and/or swelling of the lips. With home whitening, irritation can result from over filling your trays causing leakage onto the gum tissue. Irritation can also occur if you are using the tray for too many hours when you first start whitening. It may be necessary for you to reduce the amount of gel placed and reduce the amount of time you are wearing the trays or stop wearing for a few days.

I have read the information provided and understand the whitening procedure. Dr. Price or their staff has explained this procedure to me and all of my questions, if any, were answered. I consent to this treatment.

Patient signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dentist signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_