

# **Tooth Whitening Information/ Informed Consent**

## **I. General Information**

Tooth whitening is designed to lighten the color of your teeth. Significant lightening can be achieved in the vast majority of 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 bleached, but should be considered when deciding to have the treatment.

## **II. Candidates for Tooth Whitening**

Just about anyone is a candidate for teeth 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. Teeth with many fillings, cavities, chips, etc., are usually best treated by bonding, porcelain veneers, or porcelain crown.

## **III. Types of Tooth Whitening**

### **A. One-Hour Whitening**

This process may be done in one visit or may require multiple visits depending on how your teeth respond to the whitening gel. Each appointment takes about one hour. Gum protection is applied, the whitening gel is applied.

The advantages of power whitening include us doing all the work for you and in less time than you would spend home bleaching your teeth. 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 increasing costs as compared to home whitening.

### **B. Take-home Whitening**

This process, which can be done anywhere and any time, involves wearing a custom-made bleaching tray (looks like a thin, transparent night guard) filled with a mild bleaching agent. You must wear the gel-filled tray 1/2 – 2 hours per day for about two to four weeks. The advantages of home whitening include performing the treatment when it is convenient for you with possibly lower cost. The disadvantage to home bleaching is that the success of the treatment is dependant on your commitment to wearing the whitening tray routinely for the period prescribed.

## IV. Your Responsibilities

### A. Wearing Your Whitening Tray

If you choose home whitening, it will only be effective if you conscientiously wear the tray for the prescribed number of hours per day.

### B. Communication

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

## V. Potential Problems

### A. 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 power whitening, the sensitivity would usually subside in 1-2 days. With home whitening, 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 more sensitive for an extended period of time. 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 teeth return to normal.

### B. Gum Irritation

This is the result of a small amount of solution leaking under the dental dam. A burning sensation on your gums may also occur. This will resolve by itself in a few hours or couple of days.

With home whitening, irritation can result from the tray for too many hours when you first start whitening. It may be necessary for you to reduce the number of hours you wear the tray or stop using it for a short time to resolve these gum problems.

### C. Effect on Fillings

Be aware that tooth colored fillings will not whiten. If the filling matches your current color, bleaching will result in mismatched shades with your natural teeth. You may need to have your fillings replaced so that they will match your newly whitened teeth.

## VI. Completion of Treatment

### A. Level of Lightening

There is no totally reliable way to predict how light your teeth will whiten. With power whitening, one session usually significantly whitens your teeth. Some patients require an additional session. With home whitening, this may take two to four weeks or longer.

## B. Relapse

Following completion of whitening, pigments found in food and drinks will re-stain your teeth, commonly called “bleaching relapse”. To help prevent relapse, use daily over-the-counter toothpaste. After home whitening you may wish to wear your trays once every few months filled with bleaching gel.

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Patient's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness