

# TOOTH WHITENING

## WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

Teeth play a major roll in our appearance. Nothing would look more appealing than a big smile with white teeth.

Unfortunately teeth do, over time discolour. There are many reasons why. Discolouration can be caused from drinking tea, coffee, wine, some foods and smoking.

This type of staining is known as extrinsic (surface) staining and can be reduced with regular visits to the dentist for a scale and clean.

The other type of discolouration is intrinsic (internal). This is a result of natural defects, tooth trauma, or possibly caused by medication.

This type of staining can only be removed by using a professional tooth whitening treatment.

**Treatment:** Once the type of discolouration and the best treatment plan has been decided the treatment will begin.

Tooth whitening is a process of lightening the colour of teeth.

The whitening process is most effective on mildly discoloured teeth. Darker stains take longer to respond to treatment.

The degree of whiteness will vary from patient to patient. Please ask us to assess if you would be a good candidate for tooth whitening.

### **Process:**

#### **Home bleaching**

Firstly impressions will be taken of your teeth for make trays to specifically fit your mouth.

These trays are made of thin plastic that fit over the teeth only. These trays will isolate the bleaching solution to the tooth surface and keeps contact with the gum tissues to a minimum.

The Bleaching gel is placed in the thin trays and inserted over the teeth. As the active ingredient is broken down, oxygen enters the enamel and dentin and bleaches the coloured substances.

The structure of the tooth is not changed, only the tooth is made lighter and whiter.

This treatment can be done during the day for two hours (maybe while you are cooking,

walking or watching TV) or over night. The treatment should be carried out for two weeks

#### **Power bleaching**

This procedure is done in the dental chair over one to two hours. The bleach is a stronger concentration than that of the home bleaching. This bleach may be activated with a lazer light.

It produces an instant result, but still lightens for a few days after.

Bleaching is a painless, effective and economical way of having that "Hollywood Smile".

#### **Bleaching of a root canal treated tooth**

Teeth that have been root canal treated no longer have a blood supply and can discolour over time.

Because the tooth is darker throughout the best way to whiten the tooth is to have the tooth internally bleached.

To do this a small hole will be made in the back of the tooth and a bleaching agent will be placed inside the hole, a temporary filling will be put over the hole and left for a week with the bleach inside.

If the tooth is still a little darker the procedure will be repeated until the tooth is whiter.

Once the tooth is at the desired whiteness a permanant filling will be replaced into the tooth.

**Side effects:** Some people experience tooth sensitivity during treatment. This symptom should disappear within 1 – 3 days after stopping or completing the treatment.

If you find the sensitivity severe try the bleaching ever second day.

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