

TOOTH WHITENING (BLEACHING) FAQs *Please check prevailing fees at reception or with your dentist.*

How does it work? Clear trays to fit your teeth which will carry the bleaching gel to be worn at home. The gel is placed in the reservoirs (space) created on the lip facing side of normally first five teeth on each side. Remove all the excess gel around the gums or the palate to avoid irritation of gums. You should avoid ingestion of the gel but small quantities of ingestion will not do any harm.

What are different types of processes to whiten your teeth?

i) Home whitening-Using 16% Carbamide Peroxide or 6% Hydrogen Peroxide in the trays. This is our standard recommended procedure. Using adhesive strips impregnated with the bleaching gel. This is good for people who do not tolerate trays.

ii) In surgery "power" whitening with Hydrogen Peroxide. This is done with a more concentrated gel to give you an immediate result. This takes 1.5 hours for the dentist to complete. We only recommend this in exceptional circumstances.

iii) Combi i) & ii)

Will I have to bleach my teeth again to top it up? Yes you may want to as the whitening effect will fade over months/years. On average patients need a top-up after 1-2 years. Look after the trays – they can be re-used as long as they fit and are not damaged.

Does it always work? What shade can I expect? Is there a guarantee? If this happens and you are wearing the bleaching trays as recommended, you may need to try a different bleaching product or a slightly higher concentration of the bleaching material. Each person responds differently to the application of the gel. There is no guarantee of outcome. Most cases lighten by three to four shades. Your original shade will be recorded at outset with your help. If your teeth are quite dark or very yellow/grey/tetracycline stained, it will take longer to bleach the teeth.

How do I use it? Keep the gel refrigerated. Use the filled tray in the mouth for 1-3 hrs during wakeful hours with the daytime gel or sleep with the filled trays in with the night time gel.

Tooth sensitivity after applications (side effects)? Sensitivity of teeth is the most common side effect of home bleaching. If you are experiencing any sensitivity, you should stop bleaching your teeth for a few days. It may help to use sensitive formula toothpaste into the bleaching trays for an hour a day. Alternatively, you can rub the desensitising toothpaste into the gum margins with your finger 5 times per day for a few days.

What about my existing crowns and fillings? If you have white fillings/veneers/crowns in the front teeth that match the existing shade of your teeth before you bleach, they will not match the lightened teeth afterwards. These may need replacing at additional cost.

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, gum and tissue of the mouth. The bleaching material has a pH which is neutral.

Can I not buy the kit over the counter (OTC) ? There may be problems with the bleaching kits that are purchased OTC or on the internet. Some of these products do not have the active ingredient carbamide peroxide or hydrogen peroxide, or not in the correct concentrations. They may contain acids which can damage the teeth or thin down the enamel of the teeth. Also please note, by law, only GDC-registered Dentists and Therapists/Hygienists can perform tooth whitening. Others are doing it unlawfully!

What if I am a smoker? It is best to stop smoking for at least 3 weeks before commencing the bleaching procedure. Smoking causes the teeth to stain/darken and the whitening effects will be diminished.

What is the minimum age to bleach teeth? We cannot carry out bleaching for under 18 year olds due to legal restrictions. The technique of bleaching teeth is not for everybody. There are some situations where bleaching teeth is contradicted such as where the front teeth are already crowned, where there are very large fillings on the front teeth or where the teeth are already excessively worn and there is tooth surface loss. Your dentist will advise you of your suitability.

How to use the gel in trays: Load the tray using about the size of a lentil in the groove or a dimple (if present in the tray). If not place gel in contact with the lip facing inside surface of the tray which will touch the lip facing surface of the teeth. Do not fill the whole chamber. After use, clean using cold water, liquid detergent using a small brush such as interspace brush. Leave to dry

