

## What to Expect during your Whitening Treatment

Your dentist has given you a bleaching kit to take home with you together with your bleaching trays. It is essential that you follow the instructions given by your dentist and the manufacturer's instructions in wearing the trays and applying the bleaching agent. Below are answers to the most frequent asked questions.

### **How long should I wear the trays for?**

This depends on the amount of lightening that you desire and the original shade of the teeth. If your teeth are quite dark or very yellow/grey/tetracycline stained it will take longer to bleach the teeth. If you are not experiencing any sensitivity you may wear the trays for at least 1-2 hours and even sleep with the trays in your mouth. It is very important to remove all excess material around the gums or the palate prior to going to sleep.

The darker your teeth, the longer your teeth will take to get lighter. Tetracycline stained teeth can take 6 months or up to one year to bleach the teeth. Some teeth can whiten after one month.

If you cannot wear the trays for a few days because of your hectic schedule, it does not matter. Bleach your teeth according to your own schedule. Some people put the trays in after dinner and wear them for the first hour while watching TV or doing the dishes. Then if everything is fine they replenish the trays and sleep with them in their mouth.

### **What do I do if I have sensitivity?**

Sensitivity of teeth is the most common side effect of home bleaching. In fact many patients suffer from sensitive teeth anyway. This usually occurs around the necks of teeth where the gums have receded. If you are experiencing any sensitivity you should stop bleaching your teeth for a few days. You can resume after about 3-4 days. If the teeth become ultra-sensitive you can place sensitive tooth paste into the bleaching trays for an hour a day or overnight. That will usually stop the sensitivity. Alternatively, you can rub de-sensitising tooth paste into the gum margins with your finger 5 times per day for a few days.

If you are concerned, please call your dentist.

### **What happens if the teeth do not bleach evenly?**

If the teeth have white spots on them before bleaching, these spots will appear whiter during the first few days, however the contrast between the spots and the rest of the tooth will lessen and eventually they will not be noticeable. Sometimes the dentist can do a special procedure called Microabrasion for you where the white spots can be more permanently removed. Ask your dentist about the procedure if you are concerned about this.

You may notice new white spots occurring on the teeth while you are undertaking the bleaching treatment. These white spots were already present on the teeth before bleaching. As the teeth become lighter they become more visible. Do not worry. As the whole tooth itself becomes lighter these spots will fade. You may notice these spots immediately after a bleaching session or in the morning if you have been wearing the trays for the whole night.

Some teeth may appear banded with lighter/whiter areas. Again these banding areas are originally present on the tooth. As the tooth is dark these bandings are not obvious. As the tooth becomes lighter, the lighter parts of the tooth will lighten first followed by the darker banded area. After a week or so these will not be noticeable anymore. Please note that if you have any fillings, crowns or other restorations in visible places on your teeth, these will not change colour with the whitening process and may need replacing at the end of the process to match in with the new shade of your teeth – your dentist will advise you if this could be the case.