

# VICTORIA DENTAL PRACTICE



## TOOTH WHITENING

This information is provided to give the patient insight into professional methods of teeth whitening. As in all health care, there are limitations and risks. Absolute success cannot be guaranteed.

### **Who are the best candidates for whitening?**

Almost anyone is a candidate for whitening. Experience shows that people with dark yellow or yellowish-brown teeth sometimes achieve better whitening results than those with grey or bluish grey teeth. Multi-coloured teeth, especially if stained due to tetracycline, do not whiten as well. In addition, teeth with many fillings, cavities, chips, etc. may be instead better treated through composite bonding, porcelain veneers, or porcelain crowns. Filling materials will not improve their colour with whitening, and so may actually look darker next to a whitened tooth. A medical history form is also required to be completed prior to treatment. Some medical conditions may exclude you from treatment such as:-

- People with significant periodontal disease are not candidates.
- People with fillings that may be breaking down with cavities in their teeth, or with chipped or worn teeth may be better treated with restorative procedures first.
- Pregnant women should obtain permission from their doctor before whitening.
- Heavy smokers should discontinue the use of tobacco after whitening, for 24 hours if possible.

### **Take-Home Whitening**

This process can be done anywhere not just at home. It involves wearing a custom-made whitening tray that looks like a thin, transparent night guard. You fill the tray with a small amount of mild whitening gel. You then need to wear the gel filled tray for the specified period of the time each day (as per our instructions). This procedure must be continued over a period of time that generally extends from 2-4 weeks. We will check your whitening progress as necessary during the period you are using the whitening gel.

- The advantage of Take-Home Whitening is the ease of use.
- The disadvantages include the inconvenience of wearing the whitening tray, and that your results will depend on your consistent use of the tray.

Contact Victoria Dental Practice for help and advice.

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### **What should be expected upon completion of professional whitening?**

We have obtained excellent results in most cases, but there is not a definite way to predict how light your teeth will get. Teeth in the yellow shade range tend to whiten better than those in grey or grey-brown ranges.

Teeth discoloured by certain antibiotics, decalcification, root canal therapy or trauma do not respond as predictably, and often require additional treatment.

If your teeth are already a shade of A-1 to B-1, on an in-practice shade guide, your additional results will be minimal.

### **What are the potential side effects of whitening teeth?**

**Tooth sensitivity:** During treatment patients may experience some sensitivity. This will usually be mild and subside on one or two days. However if sensitive it may be necessary to reduce the number of hours you can wear the tray, or stop using it for a short period of time. Your dentist can advise you on this.

If your teeth are hypersensitive to begin with, please ask us about desensitisation procedures before we start the treatment.

**Other problems:** These can include gum irritation (usually minor), sore throat, sensitivity from leaking fillings or cavities, toothbrush abrasion/erosion, root resorption in root canal treated teeth.

### **Other considerations**

Peroxide solutions have been available for many years as an antiseptic in the mouth and it is widely used for its effect on whitening teeth.

If tooth sensitivity develops, sensitive toothpastes, and/or tooth mousses may be used to reduce sensitivity. Your dentist can advise you on this.

Frequent gargling/rinsing mouth with luke-warm salt water may ease sensitivity.

Temporary inflammation of and or white spots on your gums can be caused by the whitening procedure, or the overloading of your whitening tray with the peroxide. This should resolve within 5 days, but if it occurs do contact the practice for advice.

If you have fillings that are breaking down, decay in your mouth, erosions of the teeth or exposed root surfaces, due to periodontal disease, the peroxide may cause tooth sensitivity. Such conditions need correction prior to the whitening procedure. Please inform your dentist. The whitening procedure can be very effective at whitening the teeth, but will not change the colour of the fillings or crowns already in your teeth. For aesthetic reasons such fillings may need changing after the whitening procedure.

Any whitening effects may deteriorate with time, and patients may wish for the treatment to be repeated. If the trays are cared for this may be able to be achieved with the same trays and simply a top up of the whitening gel. However your dentist will be consulted before any more gel may be purchased to ensure its suitability, and the suitability of the trays.

### **Patient Responsibilities**

Avoid the use of tobacco, tea, coffee, red wine and other teeth staining foods i.e. tomato paste and dark green vegetables for 1-2 days after whitening.

Never place household or commercial bleaches in your mouth.

Keep your recall appointments with your dentist.

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