

# Tooth whitening



## What is tooth whitening?

Tooth whitening is a process whereby very mild bleaches are used to make natural teeth lighter. Tooth whitening does not remove any of your natural teeth and therefore is a safe method to make your teeth whiter. The bleaches used to whiten teeth can legally only be provided by dentists.



Grey discolouration of two front teeth

## Why do I need tooth whitening?

Most patients have tooth whitening as they want to make their teeth lighter. Unfortunately, tooth whitening to lighten teeth for appearance only is not provided by dental students.

Sometimes teeth undergo developmental or disease processes which cause them to darken. In these cases, tooth whitening is considered for treatment with dental students.



Discolouration improved from selective tooth whitening

## What happens during treatment?

- Impressions of your teeth using a putty-like substance are taken.
- Whitening trays are made to fit over your teeth.
- Dental bleach is syringed into the whitening trays which are then inserted over your teeth.
- Special instructions are given for how to use the bleach and bleaching trays:
  - » Clean your teeth before using bleach and whitening trays.
  - » Apply a small drop of bleach to the front surface of each tooth you need to bleach in your whitening trays.
  - » Insert your whitening tray and wipe away any excess bleach near the gums.
  - » Wear your whitening trays for a minimum of 2 hours. Most patients choose to wear them at night whilst sleeping.
  - » Remove the trays and rinse after use.
  - » DO NOT use household bleach or boiling water to clean your whitening trays.

## What are the advantages of tooth whitening?

**Lighter teeth:** Over several days your will notice your tooth/teeth appear lighter. Lighten until you are happy with the shade or/ it matches your other teeth.

## What are the risks of tooth whitening?

- **Restorations:** Dental restorations (such as fillings, crowns and veneers) will **not** whiten. Tooth whitening only works on natural teeth.
- **Sensitivity:** Some patients experience sensitivity during whitening. This is only temporary and resolves once tooth whitening has stopped. Try using sensitive toothpaste to brush your teeth during tooth whitening.
- **Shade changes:** Over time your tooth shade may darken again and you will need to repeat tooth whitening.

## What happens after treatment is finished?

To check that you and your dental professional are happy with the outcome of your tooth whitening, you will be reviewed after your whitening is finished.

When all of your dental treatment is complete, you will be discharged from the dental school. We advise that you find a dentist outside the dental school to continue to look after your teeth and restorations.

## Types of questions you may want to ask...

- When should I wear my whitening trays?
- How many days/weeks should I whiten my teeth for?
- What should I do if I experience tooth sensitivity?

## And finally...

Maintaining good oral hygiene is crucial for healthy teeth and gums, and will help reduce the risk of decay and gum disease. Brush your teeth twice daily for 2 minutes with fluoride toothpaste and clean between your teeth with floss or interdental brushes.

Smoking and alcohol increase the risk of oral disease. If you want to quit smoking or reduce your alcohol intake, please talk to the clinician you see for further advice.

It is important to attend dental check-ups regularly, as this will help your dentist to identify any dental disease early.

Please ask at reception  
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**Contact us:**

Monday to Friday,  
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