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Bleaching (Tooth Whitening).

The bleaching of teeth is a very effective way to brighten and lighten dark or discoloured teeth. We use the home bleach system, where a mild bleaching agent is placed in a mouth guard/whitening tray and worn at night. This technique offers the advantage that the patient is in control of the amount of lightening that takes place. The bleaching can involve a single tooth or all the teeth. Some sensitivity of the teeth is sometimes experienced, but this is always of a passing nature.

One of the biggest concerns with bleaching is that teeth tend to become darker again as time goes by, especially if you consume lots of coffee, tea, red wine, or tobacco. If re-discoloration takes place, a few nights of re-bleaching using the same mouth guard is usually sufficient to achieve the desired shade again. The bleaching agent used in this system has been extensively researched and proven to be safe when used as prescribed.

While most patients sleep with the tray and bleaching gel in place, a good result can still be achieved by wearing the trays with bleach for about 2-3 hours per day.

You'd have to accept that the teeth won't bleach uniformly white. The canine teeth will always be darker than the rest of your teeth, the lower front teeth will be whiter, and the necks of the teeth will be darker than the incisal edges.

Remember that white fillings, crowns and bridges won't change colour, and might have to be replaced after whitening to achieve a better colour match.

Instructions for tooth-whitening with trays and carbamide peroxide:

- Place a small drop of gel in the cavity for each tooth in the whitening tray and place it over your teeth. Don't fill the tray, as excess bleach will push out over the sides and irritate your gums.
- Wear the trays with gel anything from 2-8 hours per day.

- If sensitivity of the teeth occurs, reduce the exposure of the teeth to the bleaching gel by wearing them for shorter duration or on alternate nights. When not using the bleaching gel you can place toothpaste for sensitive teeth such as Sensodyne or Colgate Pro-Relief in the trays to reduce the sensitivity.
- During the bleaching process, avoid strong black coffee or tea, curry with turmeric, smoking and red wine.
- 6-8 syringes of gel used over a period of 10-15 days is usually sufficient to achieve a good result. Any gel left over should be kept in the fridge, and allowed to warm to room temperature before using it for the occasional maintenance bleaching.
- When removing the trays, rinse the trays with water, rinse your mouth and brush your teeth. Store the trays in the box provided.
- Do not overdo the bleaching. If bleached too much, the incisal parts of the front teeth becomes more transparent and can appear grey as the darkness in the back of the mouth is visible through the transparent enamel.