**INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT FOR TEETH WHITENING**

**What is Teeth Whitening?**

Teeth whitening is a dental procedure during which a suitable peroxide-based solution is used returning the teeth back to the shade they may have been previously, or sometimes even lighter.

Teeth whitening is a patient-led treatment; it is your responsibility to ensure that you follow the instructions provided. Failure to do so will result in the treatment taking longer and being ineffective.

You will be given a whitening kit to take home with you together with your whitening trays. It is essential that you follow the instructions given by your dentist and the manufacturers’ instructions in wearing the trays and applying the whitening agent.

**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, spoty or heavily 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 the excess material around the gums or the palate prior to sleeping with the trays.

With most teeth whitening procedures, we can get results within 2-4 weeks. The darker your teeth, the longer they will take to get lighter. Severe staining, like tetracycline stained teeth, can take from 6 months to one year to reach the desired colour. 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. Whiten your teeth according to your own schedule. Some people put the trays in after dinner and wear them for the first couple of hours while watching TV or doing the dishes. Then if everything is fine they replenish the trays and sleep with them in the mouth.

To achieve a long lasting and stable result it is advised you whiten every day until you are happy. Once you are happy with the new colour of the teeth, we encourage you to slightly over whiten by a further 3-4 days, as the colour will slightly regress back.

**Treatment Protocol**

1. Always brush your teeth prior to whitening, inc. tooth brush & interdental brushes/floss
2. Apply gel to the tray as directed by your dentist to each tooth/teeth you wish to whiten
3. Ensure whitening trays and the teeth are dry. (Tip: You can suck air or breath in heavily through the mouth to help dry your teeth).
4. Place trays and ensure they are fully seated by running your finger along them
5. Depending on the type of gel used your wear time will be:
   1. Day Whitening – worn during the day for a maximum of 2 hours.
   2. Night Whitening – worn overnight when sleeping for a maximum of 6 hours.
6. Following completion remove trays and clean under cold running water. Also ensure to rinse mouth of any residual gel.
7. Dry trays and keep in box for safety
8. Keep the gel in the fridge

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

Sensitivity of teeth is the most common side effect of home whitening. In fact many patients suffer from sensitive teeth anyway. This occurs usually around the necks of the teeth where the gums have receded.

Sensitivity can be broadly classified in three categories

* Mild sensitivity: this is common in some patients and should not deter you from your day to day activities. If this occurs, you do not need to stop whitening. The sensitivity will resolve after you stop the whitening.
* Moderate sensitivity. This happens in a small proportion of patients. Common examples are when you are unable to tolerate the extent of sensitivity with your meals. If you are experiencing this level of sensitivity, you can try one of two things
  + Whitening only for 1-2 hours a day and do not sleep with whitening gels/trays in your mouth. Instead, you can put small amounts of tooth paste in your trays and sleep with the toothpaste overnight
  + You should whiten your teeth on alternate days and use the trays with small amounts of toothpaste on alternate days.
  + You can rub sensitising toothpaste into the gum margins with your finger 2-3 times per day for a few days.
  + If you are at all concerned, please contact the clinic for a review.
* Severe sensitivity. This is when, for example, your teeth severely hurt or the wind in the air exacerbates pain significantly. Should this happen, you should stop whitening immediately and contact the clinic for a review.

**Food & Drink advice**

During the procedure your teeth will become more porous as the gel is absorbed. This is a temporary phenomenon and will resolve normally within weeks of completing the procedure. However, because of this the teeth will become more sensitive and therefore more susceptible to picking up staining from external sources. It is advised to avoid staining foods throughout the procedure. This includes but is not limited to:

* Tea & coffee – particularly black
* Smoking
* Corsodyl mouthwash and other cationic containing mouthwashes
* Curry
* Soy sauce
* Beetroot

**What happens if the teeth do not whiten evenly?**

If the teeth have white spots on them before whitening, these spots will appear whiter during the first few days, however the contrast between the spots and the rest of the tooth will be less and eventually they will not be as noticeable. Sometimes your dentist may need to perform additional procedures like microabrasion or resin infiltration treatments (which will cost additional) for you where the white spots can be more permanently removed.

You may notice new white spots occurring on the teeth while you are undertaking the whitening treatment. These white spots were already present on the teeth before whitening treatment was started but not noticeable to you. As the teeth become lighter they become more visible. Do not worry. As the whole tooth becomes lighter these spots may fade. You may notice these white spots immediately after a whitening 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, this is because these bandings are originally present on the tooth but when the tooth was dark these bandings were 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 should no longer be noticeable.

**Expectations and Contraindications**

* Very dark teeth, such as C-shade (Grey, tetracycline or tobacco stained), D shade (red-gum margins) are difficult to whiten and may take a long time (many months) to achieve a satisfactory colour.
* If your target shade is more than 8 shades from your baseline, or your teeth are naturally a C or D shade, you may need alternative treatment, such as veneers.
* Very translucent teeth may not appear white after this treatment.
* Teeth affected by white or brown spots, such as those affected by fluorosis or developmental defects, can take longer to whiten, sometimes months, and ultimately may never completely resolve, resulting in the need for alternative treatment, such as a veneer.
* White spots on teeth will appear much whiter after first using whitening gel, however as the rest of the tooth whitens with daily gel application, this will become less apparent.
* The extent to which your teeth will whiten cannot always be accurately predicted. It takes on average between 2-5 weeks to whiten your teeth and the amount of gel required varies between people. Therefore, you may need to purchase more tubes to achieve the desired result.
* Only tooth material will whiten so some fillings and crowns may look out of place afterwards, meaning some people choose to then have those replaced.
* Gum irritation can be caused by rubbing from the trays and leakage of the gel. It is therefore important to only use the amount shown, excessive use of gel is counter-productive as trays will not fit as tightly, and therefore the teeth will not whiten effectively.

**How will my teeth feel?**

Normally the teeth feel very clean after the whitening procedure. The whitening materials also have an indirect effect on the gums of improving their health. This is how the technique was invented as it was first used to treat the gum irritation caused by orthodontic treatment.

**What about my smile?**

Your smile will appear brighter as a bonus. It is very rare, but sometimes the teeth do not lighten at all. If this happens and you are wearing the whitening trays as recommended, you may need to try a different whitening product or a slightly different concentration of the whitening material.

If you have white fillings in the front teeth that match the existing shade of your teeth before whitening your teeth, they may not match the teeth afterwards. This is because your teeth can lighten, but the fillings do not lighten. When the desired colour has been achieved, the dentist can replace these fillings with a lighter shade of filling material to match the new shade of your teeth. Normally the dentist will wait a week before changing the fillings.

**How long does the whitening last? Will I have to whiten my teeth again?**

Normally the new white colour of your teeth keeps quite well. The effect is dependent on what has caused the teeth to discolour in the first place. If you drink coffee, red wine, cola drinks the effect may darken slightly. Additional whitening gels can be purchased to

top-up treatments every 6 -24 months.

The dentist will normally ask you to return your trays after the desired shade of lightening has been achieved. This is to ensure that you do not over whiten your teeth.

**Does whitening harm the teeth or gums?**

Safety studies have shown that whitening teeth using the dentist prescribed home whitening technique is perfectly safe on the teeth, cheeks, gum and tissue of the mouth.

There are problems with the whitening kits that are purchased over the counter. Although they are inexpensive, they normally contain an acid rinse, which can damage the teeth or thin down the enamel of the teeth. This acid rinse can be extremely harmful to the teeth.

The technique of whitening is not for everybody. There are some situations where whitening teeth is contraindicated such as where the front teeth are already crowned or where there are very large fillings on the front teeth or where the teeth are already excessively worn and there is tooth surface loss. The most ideal situation is where the teeth are healthy and strong but have become more discoloured with age.

We are planning to whiten your teeth using a safe peroxide-based gel. Please read the following instructions carefully.

1. The active ingredient is carbamide peroxide or a hydrogen peroxide in a glycerine base. If you know of any allergy or are aware of an adverse reaction to this ingredient, please do not proceed with this treatment.
2. As with any treatment there are benefits and risks. The benefit is that teeth can be whitened fairly quickly in a simple manner. The risk involves the continued use of the whitening gel for an extended period of time. Research indicates that using whitening gels to whiten teeth is safe.
3. The amount of whitening varies with the individual. Most patients achieve a change within 2 - 6 weeks. Reduce the consumption of tea, coffee, red wine, berries and curries during or after treatment for at least 1 month.
4. It is advisable not to smoke during the course of whitening treatment and for at least 6 - 12 weeks afterwards.
5. You may notice slight sensitivity after a few days of treatment. If this should occur follow the advice given above.
6. Do not use the whitening treatment if you are pregnant. There have been no adverse reactions, but long-term clinical effects are unknown.
7. Wear the trays as prescribed by your dentist.
8. After the desired amount of tooth whitening has been achieved, it may be necessary to do a top-up treatment in 6 - 24 months depending on the amount of staining and your diet.

I have read the above information and agree to return for examination in days after treatment begins and at any recommended time afterwards. I have read and received a copy of this information sheet. I consent to treatment and assume the risks described above.

I consent to photographs being taken. I understand that they may be used for documentation and for illustration of my treatment.

**Patient's Signature: Date:**

# Facts for Consideration

**I understand** yellow and brown stains usually lighten better than gray or blue stains. Some stains return after treatment is discontinued. Retreatment may be required. Teeth with multiple colorations, bands, or spots due to tetracycline use or fluorosis (discoloration of tooth enamel) do not whiten well and may need multiple treatments or may not whiten at all.

**I understand** that teeth with many fillings may not lighten and are usually best treated with other non-whitening alternatives.

**I understand** that whitening treatments only lighten the natural tooth structure and cannot lighten crowns, veneers, composite, or other restorative materials.

**I understand** professional in-office whitening may require more than one office visit. Most whitening treatments will result in teeth lightening one-to-two shades on a dental shade guide.

If I choose to participate in an at-home whitening program, **I understand** there are specific instructions that I must follow. My dentist has given these instructions to me, and **I understand** my responsibility when using these products.

# Benefits of Whitening, Not Limited to the Following:

**I understand** that participating in whitening treatments can whiten my teeth, giving me a healthier-appearing smile.

# Risks of Whitening, Not Limited to the Following:

**I understand** tooth whitening is unpredictable and there are no guarantees that tooth whitening will work.

**I understand** tooth whitening may cause teeth to become sensitive. Should sensitivity occur and persist for any length of time, I will notify the clinic immediately.

**I understand** that the gums and/or soft tissue in my mouth may be exposed to the various agents used in whitening procedures which may cause an allergic response or inflammation. This could also be due to an inadvertent exposure of a small area of those tissues to the whitening gel.

**I understand** it is impossible to place a specific time frame on how long the lightened appearance of whitened teeth will maintain the lightened shade. These time periods may vary depending on conditions that exist from my habits and circumstance (For example, daily coffee drinking, smoking, or genetics) which may be internal, external, or both

**I understand**, any existing sensitivity, recession, exposed dentine, or other

dental conditions that cause sensitivity or allow penetration of the

whitening product into the tooth may require additional treatment.

# Consequences if no Treatment is Administered, Are Not Limited to the Following:

**I understand** if I do not participate in whitening procedures, my tooth color will remain the same or continue to discolor further.

# Alternatives to Tooth Whitening, Are Not Limited to the Following:

**I understand** that depending on the reason I have my teeth whitened, alternatives may exist including, but not limited to, microabrasion, resin infiltration, bonding, crowns, and veneers. I have asked my dentist about them and their respective expenses. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction regarding the procedures and their risks, benefits, and costs.

No guarantee or assurance has been given to me by anyone that the proposed treatment will cure or improve the conditions(s) listed above. I have had my questions answered to my satisfaction.

* I consent to the whitening treatment as described above.
* I refuse to give my consent for the proposed treatment as described above.
* I have been informed of and accept the consequence if no treatment is administed

Pt name

Date:

Signature