

# TEETH WHITENING INFORMATION/ INFORMED CONSENT

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Teeth Whitening is a procedure which is designed to lighten the color of your teeth. When done properly, the whitening will not harm your teeth or gums. Significant lightening can be achieved in the vast majority of cases, but the results cannot be guaranteed. Teeth Whitening, like any other treatment, has some inherent risks and limitations. These are seldom serious enough to discourage you from having your teeth bleached, but should be considered in making a decision to have the treatment.

In addition, there are variables, such as the type of discoloration that affects your teeth, the degree to which you follow our instructions, the overall condition of your teeth, etc., that can affect the outcome of treatment.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCEDURE

Zoom! In –office tooth whitening is a procedure designed to lighten the color of your teeth using a combination of a hydrogen peroxide gel and a specially designed ultraviolet lamp. The Zoom! Treatment involves using the gel and lamp in conjunction with each other to produce maximum whitening results in the shortest possible time. During the procedure, the whitening gel will be applied to your teeth and your teeth will be exposed to the light from the Zoom! lamp for three (3) 15 minute sessions. During the entire treatment, a plastic retractor will be placed in your mouth to help keep it open and the soft tissues of your mouth (i.e. lips, gums, cheeks and tongue) will be covered to ensure they are not exposed to either the gel or light. Lip balm (SPF rating 30+) may also be applied as needed and you will be provided an ultraviolet light filter for your eyes. After the treatment is completed, the retractor and all gel and tissue coverings will be removed from your mouth. Before and after the treatment, the shade of your upper-front teeth will be assessed and recorded.

## CANDIDATES FOR TEETH WHITENING

Just about anyone is a candidate for teeth whitening. However, people with dark yellow or yellow-brown teeth tend to whiten better than people with gray or bluish-gray teeth. Multi-colored teeth, especially if stained due to tetracycline, do not whiten very well. In addition, teeth with many fillings, cavities, chips etc., are usually best treated by bonding, porcelain veneers, or porcelain crowns.

## TYPES OF TEETH WHITENING

**POWER WHITENING:** This process can be done in one visit or may require multiple visits depending on how your teeth respond to the whitening solution. Each appointment takes about one to one and a half hours. A protective elastic shield called a rubber dam is placed around the teeth to be whitened. This rubber dam protects your gums from the solution which is very strong. In certain instances, a different type of gum protection is used. Then the whitening solution is applied and allowed to penetrate into your teeth to produce the desired effect. Sometimes, a special light and heat lamp will be used to further

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activate the solution. Power whitening can also be done to lighten a tooth that has had a root canal. In this instance, the tooth is whitened both from the inside as well as from the outside.

The advantages of power whitening include our doing all the work for you and in less time spent bleaching your teeth. The disadvantages include the normal inconveniences of any dental treatment such as having to keep your mouth open for the duration of the appointment and the possibility of increased costs as compared to home whitening.

**HOME TEETH WHITENING:** This process, which can be done anywhere and anytime, involves wearing a custom-made bleaching tray (looks like a thin, transparent nightguard) filled with a mild bleaching agent. You must wear the solution filled tray 1-2 hours per day for about two to four weeks.

The advantages of home whitening include performing this treatment when it is convenient for you and possibly less costs. The disadvantages include the bother of having to wear the whitening tray and the entire results are dependent on your routinely using the whitening solution.

## YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

KEEPING YOUR APPOINTMENT. This goes without saying. We can't help you if you are not here.

WEARING YOUR WHITENING TRAY. If you choose home whitening, it will only be effective if you conscientiously wear the tray for the prescribed number of hours per day.

COMMUNICATION. If you experience any severe discomfort or other problems, contact us immediately.

#### POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

TOOTH SENSITIVITY. During the first 24 hours following whitening, many patients experience sensitivity. This sensitivity is usually mild if your teeth are not normally sensitive. With power whitening, this sensitivity will usually subside in 1-2 days. With home whitening, it may be necessary for you to reduce the number of hours you are wearing the bleaching tray or stop using it for a short time to resolve the sensitivity.

However, if your teeth are normally sensitive, whitening may make your teeth much more sensitive for an extended period of time. Under these circumstances, you may choose to delay the whitening process until we are able to complete desensitization procedures.

If your teeth are sensitive after whitening, a mild analgesic such as Tylenol or Advil will usually be effective to make you more comfortable until your teeth return to normal.

GUM IRRITATION: Temporary inflammation of your gums can be caused by whitening. With power whitening, this is the result of a very small amount of solution leaking under the rubber dam or by the rubber dam itself. A burning sensation in your gums may also occur.

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This is a minor problem and will resolve by itself in a few days.

With home whitening, irritation can result from using the tray for too many hours when you first start whitening. It may be necessary for you to reduce the number of hours you are wearing the tray or stop using it for a short time to resolve these gum problems.

SORE THROAT: If you overload a tray with home whitening solution, the excess can go down your throat and cause soreness. This soreness will also resolve in several days, assuming you spit out the excess solution instead of swallowing it.

LEAKING FILLINGS OR CAVITIES: Most whitening is indicated for the outside of the teeth. However, if you have any fillings that are leaking and allow the solution to get inside of the teeth, damage to the nerves of the teeth could result. In this case, the fillings need to be redone prior to the teeth whitening. In addition, open cavities can also allow the whitening solution to reach the nerves of the teeth. They should also be filled before the whitening process takes place.

CERVICAL ABRASION/EROSION: These conditions affect the roots of the teeth when gums recede. They are the grooves, notches, or depressions where the teeth meet the gums that look darker than the rest of the teeth. They look darker because there is no enamel in these areas. Even if these areas are not sensitive, whitening can potentially penetrate the teeth and sensitize these areas. These areas should not be whitened, but should be filled before the whitening is completed.

ROOT RESORPTION: This is a condition where the root of a tooth starts to dissolve, either from the inside or outside. Although the cause of the resorption has not been determined, studies have shown that its incidence is higher in teeth that have had a root canal and are then whitened.

EFFECTS ON FILLINGS: Even though open cavities should be filled or badly leaking fillings should be refilled prior to whitening, home bleaching can cause tooth-colored fillings to become more rough and may make them more susceptible to staining. Therefore, you should be prepared to have any fillings in your front teeth replaced after whitening if this occurs. In addition, since teeth whitening will normally lighten only tooth structure, but not fillings, you may need to have your fillings replaced anyway, so that they will match your newly whitened teeth.

COMPLETION OF TREATMENT

LEVEL OF LIGHTENING: There is no totally reliable way to predict how light your teeth will whiten. With power whitening, one or more sessions are usually necessary to significantly whiten your teeth. With home whitening, this may take two to four weeks or longer.

RELAPSE: Following the completion of whitening, there may be some relapse back to their original color. To reverse this relapse, a power whitening touchup treatment may be necessary after six months. With home whitening, you may choose to wear your trays once every few months to keep the relapse from occurring at all.

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I have read and understand the procedure. This information has been explained to me and I have had the opportunity to ask questions. I consent to this treatment.

\_\_\_\_\_  
PATIENT SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
WITNESS