

TEETH WHITENING

Notes for guidance

Over the years, our teeth do a lot of work and are exposed to plenty of things that make them look less white than they should. Drinking coffee, smoking, not brushing often enough, and other factors can all contribute to dull, discolored teeth. Unfortunately, a problem with our teeth can cause problems with our self-esteem. You may be so embarrassed by your teeth that you don't want to smile or open your mouth - which can lead to problems with your professional and personal relationships. That's why more people are using teeth whitening to improve the look of their teeth and achieve a whiter, brighter smile.

Is teeth whitening right for you?

Teeth whitening may be a good choice for you, depending on your needs. If you have discolored teeth but no serious dental problems, such as cavities or gum disease, then whitening might be a good option. You also need to be prepared for repeating the bleaching process regularly because discoloration usually doesn't go away completely the first time.

What is teeth whitening?

Teeth whitening is a process of bleaching the teeth using chemical approved by the British Dental Association (BDA), usually carbamide or hydrogen peroxide. As with any type of bleaching, the stains gradually return to a more normal color following the treatments and other teeth become whiter and brighter.

Teeth whitening can be performed in two ways: at home or at the dentist's office. With the home method, you'll need to purchase an over-the-counter product designed for whitening and following the instructions carefully. You will usually need to repeat the treatments frequently for the first two to three weeks so you can achieve the results you want. Afterward, you may only need to do frequent touch-ups as your teeth become dull.

If you prefer to have your teeth whitening performed by a dentist, there are two techniques that are used – the first is basically the same technique as the at-home whitening procedure, except he or she will use a much stronger bleaching agent for the job. No anesthetic will be used, but your gums will be protected from the chemicals. Even though your dentist will be using a stronger chemical, you'll still need to repeat the process multiple times to get the results you want.

The second technique is the Zoom method – this involves using a tooth whitening bleach on the teeth and then activating the bleach with a laser. Laser whitening is the latest, most popular method of tooth whitening, and the entire procedure can take as little as 45 minutes.

Are you a good candidate?

One reason for choosing to have your teeth whitened by a dentist is he or she can properly evaluate you to make sure you are a good candidate for the process. Not everyone is. Usually younger people get better results than older people simply because their teeth will lighten more easily. If you engage in behaviors such as smoking or heavy coffee drinking, that will continue to discolor your teeth, then you would not be a good candidate.

Regardless of whether you choose the do-it-yourself approach or not, the best teeth whitening candidates do not need any additional dental work. If you have unfilled cavities or other problems with your teeth or gums, then these should be corrected before you consider teeth whitening.

How is the procedure performed?

If your teeth whitening is performed by a cosmetic dentist, he or she will begin by examining your mouth to check for any problems. Assuming everything looks good, your dentist will thoroughly clean your teeth before inserting a guard that will keep the chemicals away from your gums. Once that is in place, your dentist will apply the bleaching paste to your teeth. The chemical will need to stay on your teeth for several minutes, then it will be rinsed off and reapplied several more times. This process usually takes about 60 minutes.

With the Zoom method, your cosmetic dentist will first thoroughly clean your teeth to ensure the best result. He or she will then insert a mouth guard and apply the gel to your teeth. The next step is exposure to the lamp, which activates the hydrogen peroxide in the gel. The Zoom method is the most efficient teeth whitening method available, and results in average improvement of about 8 shades.

Your cosmetic dentist may also provide you with an at-home option for teeth whitening. He or she will create a mouth guard by taking impressions of your teeth, then you will need to apply a less potent chemical to the guard each day and wear it for at least two hours. You will usually have to keep this regime up for about six weeks to see results.

Most of the over-the-counter teeth whitening products work in the same way and use the same types of bleaching chemicals your dentist uses in his office but at lower concentrations, which is why they are not nearly as effective.

How long will it take before I feel normal again?

Teeth whitening shouldn't affect your daily routine much. You will need to make time for either your dentist's treatments or using your at-home products. Otherwise, you should begin seeing whitening after the first bleaching, although it may take several weeks of treatment to achieve the look you want. Results from the Zoom method can be seen immediately.

Are there any risks?

The biggest risk of teeth whitening is disappointment because not everyone is capable of achieving the same results. Some teeth are just easier to whiten than others.

Besides this possibility, there are a couple of other minor complications. For example, you may experience increased tooth sensitivity while you are taking the treatments. Another issue can be bleeding gums – though this is less of an issue with the Zoom method. Both of these problems can be resolved simply by adjusting the amount of chemical you're using and by reducing the frequency of your bleaching. Incidentally, these risks are most common with at-home bleaching.

Will I be happy with my results?

If you have realistic expectations for the procedure, you should be happy with the results. Remember that not everyone's teeth can be whitened equally, so you may never achieve the same gleaming smile as the celebrities and models on television. However, you should still be able to see a marked improvement in your teeth's appearance and in your self-esteem after the procedure.

Further Information

This brochure has been prepared to give a basic understanding of the procedure before a consultation takes place, and to cover many of the questions frequently asked about this type of cosmetic surgery. Final decisions should not be made until an individual assessment has taken place with the surgeon.

There is no obligation on the part of the patient to undergo surgery by attending for consultation.

If you have any further questions or would like to arrange a consultation please fill in the online form on our website at www.surgeryone.co.uk. All enquiries are always treated confidentially.