



Post – Operative Instructions for Teeth Whitening

Whitening is a procedure that is designed to lighten the color of your teeth. When done by a licensed professional and done properly, whitening should not harm your teeth or gums. Significant lightening can be achieved in the majority of cases, but particular **RESULTS CANNOT BE GUARANTEED**. Whitening, like any other procedure, has some inherent risks and limitations. Although these risks are seldom serious enough to discourage one from having his or her teeth whitened, they should be considered in making a decision whether to have the procedure performed. Pre-existing composite fillings, crowns, veneers, bridges, and removable prosthetics will not change color. However, if replacement is needed for those we recommend whitening first so your new restorations will match the new shade. There are many variables that can affect the outcome of the procedure, such as the types of discoloration that affects your teeth, the degree to which you follow our instructions, and the overall condition of your teeth. If you experience severe discomfort or any other problems, contact our office immediately.

Things to watch for:

Tooth sensitivity: During the first 24 hours following whitening many patients experience sensitivity. This sensitivity is usually mild unless your teeth are normally sensitive. Sensitivity will usually subside within 1-2 days. With take-home whitening, it may be necessary to reduce the number of hours you wear the tray or stop using it for a short time to resolve sensitivity. Brushing with fluoride after whitening can help reduce sensitivity.

Gum Irritation: Whitening may cause temporary inflammation of your gums. With take-home whitening, irritation can result from using the whitening tray too many hours when you first start whitening or using the tray too many hours in a row without a break. 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. The tray may also overlap, allowing the gel to contact your gums for an extended period. This problem can be resolved by returning to our office so we can trim the tray to a position slightly short of your gums.

Sore Throat: Most take-home whitening gel is very thick and will not run down your throat if you overload the tray with gel. However, if your gel is lower in viscosity, the excess may go down your throat and cause soreness. This soreness will subside in several days. In the event that you feel gel in your mouth or throat, spit out the excess gel instead of swallowing it.

Leaking Fillings or Cavities: Most whitening is indicated for the outside of the teeth (unless you already had a root canal). However, if you have any fillings that are leaking and the gel does get into the tooth, you could be at risk of nerve damage. It is recommended all cavities should also be filled before whitening.

Relapse: Once whitening is complete, there may be a gradual relapse back to the original color. To prevent this relapse, you may choose to wear your take-home whitening trays periodically.

You are responsible for wearing your whitening trays! Take home whitening will only be effective if you continuously wear the trays for the prescribed number of hours per day.

Opalescence Whitening Times:

- 10% wear 8-10 hours or overnight
- 15% wear 4-6 hours
- 20% wear 2-4 hours
- 35% wear 30 minutes