

Professional Tooth Whitening



Barley Mow Dental Care

About Tooth Whitening

Tooth whitening is a simple, safe, cost-effective way of improving the colour of your teeth and is one of the most popular cosmetic dental procedures we offer.

How does it work?

Whitening is achieved through soaking the teeth in a 10 – 20 % carbamyl peroxide gel for several hours at a time. It is held in place on the teeth by a thin vacuum-formed mouthguard, usually called a bleaching splint. The gel releases hydrogen peroxide which penetrates into the tooth and changes the genetic colour of the enamel and dentine. It is estimated that around 30 hours of exposure are needed to get the desired lightening, and the gel is at its most active in the first two hours. Most courses of treatment last 2-4 weeks but can take longer.

How long does it last?

Research indicates that colour stability can vary from one to ten years depending on the individual. Our own experience over the last few years would support this. If the effect does fade slightly over time then the use of one or two tubes of the gel once or twice a year should restore it. For this reason the bleaching splint(s) should be stored safely in case they are needed again.

Not A Patient of the Practice?

We cannot ethically just provide whitening and ignore the rest of your mouth. You would need to book in for a new patient examination where we would then be able to advise you if any treatment would be required before whitening could be started and discuss any particular problems you might have.

Is it safe?

The gel is non-carcinogenic, safe to ingest and is neutral in pH. There is no evidence that it can damage the teeth or gums. The main reported side-effect is increased sensitivity to cold, which is usually easily controlled by using sensitive toothpaste, and which subsides to normal after completion of treatment.

Discolored & Root Filled teeth

Teeth that are darkened after having been root filled are best lightened through a related technique which we also can provide. This involves simultaneous bleaching of the inside and outside of the tooth almost continuously for several days and can deliver spectacular improvements in colour.

What happens when I ask for tooth whitening?

A thorough dental examination is required before commencing whitening. This allows us to diagnose the reason for the discolouration and to identify any additional treatment which may become necessary after treatment (e.g. replacing mismatched crowns or fillings.) and enables an accurate cost estimate to be calculated.

Once the decision is made to go ahead then an impression is made for the splints. An appointment is made about a week later to fit the splints and demonstrate the application of the gel. A record is made of the existing colour of the teeth and often photographs will be taken.

Follow-up appointments are then made every 2-3 weeks to review progress.

Limitations:

Tooth whitening does not change the appearance of existing fillings, crowns or dentures. This may mean that additional treatment may be required to replace mismatched restorations after whitening.