



## **So You Want A Whiter Smile...**

### **Who is a candidate for whitening?**

Essentially, anyone who is unhappy with the color of their teeth is a candidate for whitening. People who have naturally dark teeth or stains caused by antibiotics ingested during the development of their teeth are definite candidates.

If you have specific questions about whether or not whitening would be a good option for you, please contact our office to schedule a consultation with one of the Doctors.

### **How does whitening work?**

Whitening doesn't "*whiten*" your teeth, but "lightens" them. In other words, if your teeth are naturally a gray, brown, or yellow shade, whitening can lighten them several shades. A preliminary shade is taken for future comparison. We will then make custom whitening trays for your upper and/or lower arches, similar to an athletic mouth guard. Unlike over-the-counter kits, these trays have a reservoir around each tooth to hold the whitening solution. The trays are also contoured along the gumline to insure the soft tissues are isolated for the solution.

Each day, you place some of the solution into the trays and place them on your teeth for several hours. This can be done while sleeping if desired. The active ingredient (10-15% carbamide peroxide) is both safe and effective at removing most stains. The desired shade is usually reached in about 10-14 days during which we will be monitoring your progress.

In addition to the take home trays, our office offers laser assisted tooth whitening procedures. Many patients will take advantage of the laser whitening option prior to starting the take home trays, as the laser treatment will accelerate the whitening process and boost the initial results.

### **What do I need to do before whitening?**

The dentist requires you to have a thorough cleaning and any decay taken care of before whitening. Tartar and plaque can inhibit the whitening process, and decay can progress rapidly if it is not taken care of prior to whitening.

### **Who should not have whitening done?**

If you have a lot of tooth colored restorations or crowns, especially in the front of the mouth, whitening may not be for you. The whitening process will not lighten any of these areas. In a case such as this, whitening can be done only with the understanding that any tooth colored restorations or crowns may need to be replaced to match your need shade.

In addition, patients who are pregnant or have pre-existing tooth sensitivity may not be candidates for tooth whitening treatments.

**Are there any side effects?**

Occasionally during the whitening process gum irritation occurs in some patients. While thorough brushing and flossing helps, this clears up after the whitening process is finished. Some other patients experience slight cold sensitivity after whitening. If this happens, a desensitizing toothpaste or prescription fluoride should help to reduce or eliminate the sensitivity.

**Is there any follow-up needed?**

The initial whitening treatment can last for years; however, food such as coffee, tea, chocolate and blueberries can cause your teeth to stain more quickly. Smoking will definitely compromise your results. We suggest you keep your trays and do touch ups as you need them. The solution should be kept in the refrigerator and has a shelf life of up to 5 years.

**What is the cost?**

The cost of whitening is \$250.00 (\$125/per arch). This fee includes the custom made trays and whitening solution, including enough for several touch ups. Most importantly, it includes your dental visits for us to monitor the effectiveness of the whitening, gum irritation, and tooth sensitivity.

Since this is considered a “*cosmetic*” procedure, insurance companies will not cover the cost of whitening.