

Bleaching (Whitening) Teeth IN the Dental Office

Bleaching live teeth that are discolored is an effective procedure, but you should know some important information before deciding to have this procedure accomplished on your teeth:

1. Bleaching is the most conservative and least expensive procedure available to whiten live, stained teeth.
2. Bleaching teeth at home is an alternative to in-office bleaching, and it should be considered.
3. Bleaching in the dental office requires one or more 30 to 60-minute appointments.
4. Slight to moderate tooth discolorations can usually be removed successfully.
5. Some teeth whiten easily, but others bleach less successfully. The only way to determine the bleaching potential of your teeth is to accomplish the bleaching procedure and evaluate the results.
6. Bleaching in the dental office may be somewhat uncomfortable during bleaching and for a short time after the procedure.
7. If discoloration is severe, crowns or veneers are usually a more acceptable treatment to lighten tooth color.
8. Your bleached teeth will require re-treatment occasionally to maintain the color to which they have been bleached.

The Clinical Procedure:

1. One or more 30 to 60-minute appointments are required. Each appointment is the same, and the appointments are at least 7 days apart.
2. Anesthetic is not used.
3. Plastic material is placed on your teeth to isolate the bleaching solution from the gums.
4. Bleaching solution, which is concentrated hydrogen peroxide, is placed on the isolated teeth.
5. Bleaching is accomplished by the concentrated hydrogen peroxide over a short period of time, usually several minutes.
6. Bleaching solution will be applied several times during each appointment.
7. The isolation plastic material is removed, and your appointment is completed.

After the Procedure:

1. Immediately after each bleaching appointment, your teeth will be lighter than they will be 24 hours later due to dehydration. The color of your teeth will return to somewhere between their dehydrated, bleached color and their original, darker color.
2. Your teeth may be sensitive for a few days because of the hydrogen peroxide application. This sensitivity will gradually disappear over a few days.
3. You may require more than one in-office bleaching appointment.
4. If slight color returns after a period of months, additional bleaching may be needed.