

Teeth Whitening Instructions

As we get older, our teeth naturally darken and pick up staining from things like tea, coffee, red wine and smoking. Teeth whitening is a safe, effective way to gradually lighten the shade of your teeth when it's carried out by a trained dental professional – and it does this without removing or damaging any of the tooth surface.

How long does it last?

The results aren't permanent, but typically last 2–3 years. How long yours lasts depends on things like whether you smoke and how often you have staining foods or drinks – and it can always be topped up later if you'd like to maintain the shade.

What does the process involve?

We'll start with a thorough examination, as whitening won't work on existing dental work such as fillings, crowns or veneers – it only lightens natural tooth enamel. Once we've agreed the best whitening system for you, we'll take moulds of your teeth to have custom, close-fitting trays made in the lab.

Once your trays are ready, we'll show you how to load them with gel and how long to wear them for. Depending on the system, this is usually a minimum of 2 hours during the day, or worn overnight. Most people reach a shade they're happy with within 2–4 weeks.

What to expect

The whitening gel we use is a carefully controlled concentration of carbamide peroxide. It's common to notice your teeth becoming more sensitive to hot and cold, and some people also get a bit of gum soreness. Our custom-fitted trays and tailored instructions are designed to keep this to a minimum, and any sensitivity settles down within a few days of stopping the gel. Please read your whitening consent form carefully and ask us anything you're unsure about before you start.

Using your whitening kit

1. Keep your whitening gel out of sunlight, somewhere cool and dry – the fridge is ideal.
2. Try to avoid staining foods and drinks (tea, coffee, red wine, curry) and smoking during treatment and for 4 weeks afterwards – this slows the whitening effect and lets your teeth pick up new stain more easily.
3. Brush and floss as normal before wearing your tray with the gel.
4. Place a small dot of gel – about half a grain of rice – in the tray for each tooth you're whitening, on the side that sits against your cheek.
5. Dry your teeth well before fitting the tray (with a tissue, or by sucking air through your teeth) – this step matters.
6. Seat the tray firmly and wipe away any excess gel with a cotton bud or toothbrush to keep it off your gums.
7. After each use, rinse your tray in cold water and keep it in its case – it can be reused later.
8. Try not to swallow the whitening gel.
9. Only use the gel we've prescribed in your tray – please don't add any other whitening products bought online or over the counter.
10. Keep the whitening gel well out of reach of children.
11. Whitening isn't recommended during pregnancy or while breastfeeding – please speak to us first.
12. If you're prone to sensitivity, using a sensitive toothpaste in the tray at a different time to whitening (for around 30 minutes) can help ease this.
13. If you get any significant sensitivity or other problems during treatment, stop using the gel and get in touch with us as soon as possible.