

“At Home” Tooth Bleaching

Hydrogen peroxide has been used for many years to bleach teeth. In past years, it was usually applied only by dentists, who used heat and/or light to accelerate its bleaching action. In recent years, a highly effective technique has been found that allows patients to bleach their teeth at home - although *only* when supervised by a dentist.*

The “at home” technique of bleaching teeth does not require heat or light, and allows you to monitor your own progress. The amount of color change depends on the length of time you wear the tray each day and the number of weeks you continue the treatment. The results can be unpredictable. Although effects may be noticed as early as a few days, many patients report that a minimum of two weeks is required to see a color change. Peroxide bleaching in custom-filled trays is thus the fastest and most painless method known.

The Procedure:

1. One or two hours before bedtime, brush and floss your teeth, in order to clean them before placement of the tray. Rinse well.
2. Place one or two drops of bleaching gel in the tray at each tooth position to be bleached. Use the gel *only* in the tray provided by us to fit your teeth.
3. Place the tray firmly over your teeth. Spit out excess gel and foam, and wear loaded tray for one (1) hour. Then remove the tray, wipe it with tissue paper to remove the gel (do not wash it out at this time), reload the tray, replace it, and wear it for another hour.
4. Anytime you remove the tray for longer than 15 minutes, place new bleaching gel in it before you use it again.
5. Re-apply the bleaching gel approximately every 3-4 hours.
6. To receive maximum bleaching potential, the tray should be worn a minimum of twelve (12) hours per day.

Possible Side Effects:

1. Some patients have reported that teeth become **sensitive to cold and biting** pressure for a short time during and after treatments. The discomfort normally does not last for an extended time. If, however, your teeth continue to be sensitive, stop using the bleaching gel and call us.
2. Your gingiva or **gums** may react to the bleaching gel by creating gum sensitivity. If it does, simply decrease the amount of bleaching gel in the tray, or return to the office so we can trim the appliance in order to reduce the amount of bleaching gel in contact with your gum tissue.
3. If bleaching trays are worn too long during any given day, **discomfort in your jaw joints** may occur. This discomfort will go away when the bleaching trays are removed.

* In the past, hydrogen peroxide was considered to be a cosmetic agent only. However, the US Food and Drug Administration is now considering registering this chemical as a drug to assure its proper use and dentist supervision.