

## **Post-Op Bleaching**

Congratulations! You are beginning a treatment process that will most definitely improve your appearance. Lightening your teeth color is exciting and really quite easy. The degree of whitening you obtain during teeth bleaching depends on how consistent you are applying the bleaching gel, the total hours the gel is in contact with your teeth, and susceptibility of your teeth to the treatment.

### Background Information

Tooth color is a genetic trait like eye or hair color. Some people were blessed with whiter teeth than others. The color of your teeth mostly comes from within the tooth (the dentin). The outer layer (enamel) surprisingly is mostly clear. Teeth darken in two ways:

First, stains accumulate on the outer surface of teeth. These are removed with a professional cleaning. Toothpastes that claim “whitening” abilities use clever marketing promising to remove surface stains better. They have minimal results and are often too abrasive.

Second, the inner part of the tooth can darken for many reasons: Medications, trauma, smoking, drinking hot dark beverages like teas and coffee, and just aging. Thankfully, by applying prescription solutions properly and allowing them to penetrate into the tooth, they can “bleach” or lighten the inner part of the tooth.

### Procedure

Properly brush and floss your teeth before applying gel.

Place a small amount of bleaching gel directly from the syringe into the deepest portions of your custom retainer.

Gently place the retainer onto your teeth. Excessive pressure/biting hard squeezes too much gel out of the retainers. One syringe of gel should be enough for 3 upper and 3 lower treatments.

Use 15% bleach for two hours, or 35% bleach for 30 minutes. Use at least once each day.

When retainers are removed, rinse and place in case.

### Possible Side Effects

Some people will experience reversible tooth sensitivity or gum irritation during treatment. If this occurs, decrease the frequency or time, or even stop the bleaching treatments until things return to normal in a day or two.

### Long term

If you don't have lifestyle factors that darken teeth, the bleaching process will be pretty permanent. However, if you do, they will certainly darken again over time.

The benefits of professional treatment include proper treatment choices, monitoring your progress, and the use of the prescription solutions in custom retainers. It is possible to overdo the treatment: ongoing use is not recommended. We will see you every week or two during the process for a brief visit in our office, but please call at any time if you have questions. We are here to help.