

TOOTH WHITENING

BACKGROUND

Over the counter 'whitening' toothpastes are available. These, however, usually contain cleaning agents intended to remove stain and restore the former colour of your teeth rather than actually make your teeth any whiter than their natural colour.

It is possible to make enamel whiter than its natural shade and this is best achieved with an agent called Carbamide Peroxide. It is very effective and an improvement of several shades can easily be achieved. The effect is not permanent, and replenishing it will be necessary from time to time. It has stood the test of time and is perfectly safe.

Carbamide Peroxide whitening can be used in two different protocols :

TEMPLATE WHITENING

- We will make a professional extremely thin, soft template to fit precisely over your teeth.
- This is almost imperceptible in use.
- Whitening gel is inserted into the template and held against the teeth.
- The templates are worn for a couple of hours daily.
- This can be during the day, or at night, and even split into several short sessions.
- You will notice the effect after one week but will probably want to continue for two to three weeks on average to obtain a really good result. You are completely in control.

POWER WHITENING

- A much stronger whitening gel is used in the dentist's surgery.
- Lip retractors and a protective covering over your gums are used to protect your skin.
- A powerful halogen lamp is used as a catalyst to accelerate the process.
- Whitening of your teeth is achieved in about one hour.
- Power whitening achieves impressive results quickly but some relapse occurs as your teeth rehydrate afterwards.
- Ultimately, the degree of whitening is comparable between both systems and the end result is determined more by the microscopic structure of your enamel, rather than the system used.
- Power whitening must be carried out in the surgery and can only be replenished at home using the template system as a backup.

We prefer the template system because it is better value for money, supported by a vast amount of research and safety testing. It leaves you completely in control and you can top it up whenever you wish. The process is more gentle and there is no risk to the soft tissues around your mouth.

TEMPLATES

Your own enamel is the single most important factor which will determine the end result of tooth whitening. The second most important factor is the fit of the templates. "*Superseal templates*" work better because they minimise gel leaking out and saliva leaking in. All our templates are now made using the latest digitally controlled positive pressure equipment rather than the less accurate vacuum formed templates.

CARBAMIDE PEROXIDE

We stock two strengths of Carbamide Peroxide : 10 % and 16%.

The stronger gel will work slightly quicker in the first instance, but, the final effect is determined by your enamel and after three weeks or so the end result with both strengths will be comparable.

Carbamide Peroxide consists of approximately 3.6 % Hydrogen Peroxide and 7% Urea. The Hydrogen Peroxide degenerates into water and oxygen. Urea degenerates into ammonia and Carbon Dioxide. All of these materials occur naturally in the body and are perfectly safe even if the gel is swallowed.

SIDE EFFECTS

Carbamide Peroxide is in fact an antiseptic and has been used as an oral antiseptic (Peroxygel) since the 1960's. As an antiseptic, it will have a small beneficial effect on gums. The gel also contains urea. This has the effect of neutralising acids and will help to prevent tooth decay.

20 % of people will experience a noticeable increase in tooth sensitivity and if you have sensitive teeth or exposed roots, this may be a concern. Any increase in sensitivity is temporary and teeth return to normal within a few days after you stop the whitening.

If you experience sensitivity, it can generally be reduced by using the templates less frequently and whitening your teeth over a longer period. Sensitivity can also be reduced by using a material such as G.C. Tooth Mousse or fluoride gels.

IMPORTANT POINTS

Porcelain crowns or veneers and white plastic fillings will not whiten. If you have restorations in your front teeth, we will be happy to discuss the implications of tooth whitening with you.

Teeth which have had nerves removed (root treatments) may need special treatment called "inside - outside bleaching". Again, we will be happy to advise.

It may be preferable to veneer very discoloured teeth and in some cases, a combination of bleaching and veneering is best.

WARNING

We strongly advise against the use of Chlorine Dioxide as a whitening agent on teeth. It has been implicated in causing irreversible pitting of enamel as well as ulceration of gums. It is an industrial bleaching agent with no proper research to support it, nor any published results of trials.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

We source our carbamide peroxide from a dental pharmaceutical company (Omni Oral Pharmaceuticals) in Florida U.S.A. Their carbamide peroxide is a pharmaceutical grade material with strictly controlled pH and safety parameters. We do not use cheaper industrial grade chemicals. This material was rated the best overall product by Clinical Research Associates * in the U.S.A. This is a highly respected independent testing laboratory for dental materials.

(* details on request)

OUR STANDARD TREATMENT

- Initial assessment and advice.
- Upper and Lower impressions.
- Laboratory made upper and lower *Superseal Templates* with template case.
- 21 Grams of Carbamide Peroxide (Six tubes of 3.5 grams each of 16% Carbamide Peroxide)
- One tube should treat one arch for one week (½ Gram per arch per day)
- Follow up consultation.

COST

Standard Treatment : £ 250.00 (with two templates & 6 tubes of CP gel)

Denplan Patients : £ 200.00 (20 % discount)

One Arch : £ 165.00 (with one template & 3 tubes of CP gel)

Denplan Patients : £ 132.00 (20 % discount)

Refill Tubes : £ 15.00 (3.5 grams 10 % or 16% Carbamide Peroxide Gel)

GC Tooth Mousse : £ 14.00 (40 gram tube)

Replacement templates at cost.