

HOME TOOTH WHITENING INSTRUCTIONS 3/14

It is very important that these instructions be followed exactly to achieve the best results. Please read all of the instructions before you begin. Your *Whitening Kit* includes tubes of whitening gel, custom made upper and lower bleaching trays, a retainer case to store your trays, and your tooth models. The whitening gel that you receive from our office is rated #1 in the dental industry and will not damage teeth or change the color of fillings. Teeth should be examined and professionally cleaned prior to whitening for best results. Individual whitening results are limited to the physiologic constraints of your teeth. Feel free to call the office if you have additional questions.

- 1. Brush and floss teeth thoroughly immediately before each whitening session;** plaque biofilm and/or tartar will not allow the gel to touch the tooth surface and will cause poor results. Begin by treating just the upper teeth first, until the desired final result is achieved, (about 8 – 14 days) before starting lower teeth. This allows the lower teeth to remain as a reference point for comparison of color change.
- 2. Apply a dab of gel equal to the size of this circle  to the inside of the tray surface that faces toward the lips for each tooth to be whitened, while being careful not to overfill.** Avoid wasting gel on back (molar) teeth, since a natural smile seldom shows more than 5 teeth on either side of the center. Place the tray in your mouth while gently pressing against the front of your teeth as you seat the tray edge toward the gum-line. This will ensure that the gel will contact the whole front surface of each tooth. If you placed too much gel into the tray, some of the gel may ooze onto your gums around the edge of the tray; using a wet cotton swab, remove excess gel off the gums. If you have put too little gel in the tray, you may see large open voids or bubbles through the clear tray. You should use approximately ½ tube of gel for one treatment; four tubes should yield about 8 total treatments for one arch. Do not eat or drink while wearing trays. Store the remaining tubes of gel in the refrigerator to prolong the shelf-life about 2 years.
- 3. Wear-time depends upon gel strength.** For gels between 10-20% concentrations, wear tray for 6 – 8 hours per day, preferably while sleeping; for concentrations over 20%, reduce wear-time to several hours once or twice a day. The trays can be removed after the treatment and your mouth rinsed with warm water. Clean out the old gel in the tray with cotton swabs under cold running water. Dry off tray between uses and store unbent in the case away from heat, as heat distorts the trays; do not rinse trays under warm or hot water; do not store trays in the car. You should not eat or drink colored foods or beverages for 2 hours following treatment. After 2 or 3 treatments, you will begin to see some lightening or some blotchy white, chalky spots on your teeth; the color will even-out about 2 - 3 weeks after your final treatment. The neck of each tooth near the gum line may appear darker because the rest of the tooth has lightened considerably by comparison. Lower front teeth may appear darker in the shadow of the upper teeth.
- 4. Repeat this treatment for 8 -14 consecutive nights.** It is not unusual to have some sensitivity or discomfort for the first 3 - 4 days, especially on lower front teeth where enamel is thinner. Gel may also temporarily irritate soft tissues, like the gums, tongue, lips, and throat; this will disappear without harm several days after all whitening treatments are completed. If you experience sensitivity after treatment, you may bleach on alternating days instead of daily; make your dentist aware of any sensitivity that develops. The sensitivity is only temporary and will disappear after several days. Over-the-counter pain relievers like naproxen (*Aleve*), acetaminophen (*Tylenol*), or ibuprofen (*Advil*) can be used as needed per the label instructions.
- 5. Return to our office to allow us to evaluate your progress.** Professional supervision is necessary to decide whether you should continue the course of treatment, or whether an increase or decrease in gel concentration is necessary. At this evaluation, you will be given gel for your lower teeth.
- 6. The best long term results are achieved by avoiding substances that stain.** Remember, all foods, substances, and drinks that stained your teeth in the past will continue to stain your teeth in the future if you continue to use them. Some of these foods include: teas and coffees, colas, steak sauce, berry juices, and wines. If you must consume a beverage that is acidic or stains, drinking it through a straw may be helpful. A rule of thumb is: if the food will stain clothes, it will stain teeth. Cigarette smoking should also be avoided because tobacco tars and smoking stains also contribute to discolored teeth. After approximately 2 - 3 weeks tooth color will stabilize. The key to longevity of brightness is monthly or bi-yearly touch-ups and daily maintenance with a non-abrasive toothpaste like Rembrandt Deeply White Toothpaste; its low abrasive formulation contains a bleaching agent that can help maintain the brightness. You may purchase this toothpaste at most pharmacies, or directly from the company at www.Rembrandt.com or phone: 1-800-433-6628.