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ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT TOOTH WHITENING

What is tooth whitening and when is it recommended?

Dental whitening is probably one of the most conservative procedures of Cosmetic Dentistry. It consists of the application of a bleaching gel (hydrogen peroxide or carbamide peroxide) in order to obtain a lighter color and shade. It is recommended not only in cases of natural dentition to improve the color of the smile, but also in multidisciplinary treatments, as a complement to several treatments in other areas of Dentistry.

What methods exist for tooth whitening and which one is the most popular?

External tooth whitening can be done in the office, where the bleaching gel is applied by the dental professional during the appointment, or at home with the use of trays.

In the case of the use of trays, the patient applies the gel inside the tray and then the trays are inserted for a certain period of time, specific to each patient, as indicated by the dentist.

The at-home bleaching technique is the most common method employed by patients. This technique requires patient cooperation but has a high rate of patient satisfaction and allows for progressive whitening over time. In office bleaching allows for more rapid whitening but may result in post-operative sensitivity, which typically abates. Studies have shown good color stability over time for both methods.

The internal bleaching technique is used in teeth with endodontic treatment, in which the gel is applied in the pulp chamber, after gutta-percha protection and with a provisional restorative material.

Actually and according to EU guidelines, the concentration of hydrogen peroxide (present or released) should not exceed 6%.

Does this technique need to be tailored for each patient?

Not all people are eligible for tooth whitening!

Before starting any type of bleaching it is necessary to make an appointment for oral, dental and periodontal evaluation and to define a treatment plan.

Some points to consider include the existence of multiple restorations and crowns or bridges for which replacement is not planned. In these cases the patient should be informed that bleaching only whitens the natural tooth structure, so that after bleaching, existing restorations may need to be replaced for aesthetic reasons.

Other points to consider are translucent teeth with grayish tones that have a guarded prognosis as to the final result. These cases are more resistant to bleaching, so the result may fall short of patient expectations. The existence of spots should also be analyzed and valued. Although in some cases they can be attenuated, in others they can be accentuated. Dental sensitivity and / or gingival recession may also result from this type of procedure.