



DENTAL MEDICINE

TEETH WHITENING

What is the importance of teeth whitening?

The colour of the teeth is directly related to dental aesthetics and can have a high psychosocial impact, with the search for a whiter and more harmonious smile becoming increasingly more common. Teeth whitening aims to make teeth clearer and aesthetically more beautiful.

Which factors can influence the colour of our teeth?

Although the natural colour of the teeth may differ from person to person, factors such as age, tartar and/or carious lesions, smoking, drinking coffee or red wine, or ingesting high pigment foods and beverages may contribute to changes in teeth coloration.

Can anyone have a teeth whitening?

Anyone can have a teeth whitening, provided an oral health assessment has been previously done. Patients with carious lesions, tooth sensitivity, or other problems of dental or gingival origin may require a prior treatment. Teeth whitening treatments are not recommended for pregnant women and, according to an European Union Directive, they cannot be performed in people under 18 years old.

Are all teeth whitened evenly?

Teeth whitening only works on natural teeth, which means that if there are any previous restorations, crowns or bridges, they will not whiten and may need to be replaced after the teeth whitening treatment in order to even out the colour of the smile.

For pulpless teeth it is necessary to do an internal whitening, which is performed by the doctor in the clinic, as it is necessary to introduce the whitening agent into the tooth and then place a temporary restoration during the period that the whitening gel is acting.

What side effects may arise?

The most common are tooth sensitivity and some gum discomfort, which usually stops with the discontinuation of treatment. However, an incorrect application of higher concentration whitening agents can lead to more serious injuries.

Who can perform a teeth whitening treatment?

Teeth whitening should be prescribed and supervised by the dentist, as some solutions found on the internet and some homemade or natural products can be harmful and damage the dental surface and/or the mouth tissues. Supervision by oral health professionals is essential given the nature of the whitening agents that are used.

How is it done and how long does the treatment take?

Currently, outpatient treatment performed by the patient at home under the supervision of the dentist is the most common. Personalized molds are made at the dental office in order to produce the trays that then, at home, preferably during the night, the patient will fill with the whitening gel, placing them in his mouth daily for the period of time indicated by the doctor. This procedure lasts, on average, two weeks, although the duration may vary depending on some factors, among which the original colour of the teeth (darker colours tend to take more days to whiten).

For a lasting result, regular Oral Hygiene appointments should be made. It's also important not to smoke and to avoid high pigment foods or beverages.

In summary, what are the various steps of a teeth whitening?

- 1. Oral Assessment Appointment:** To evaluate the dental and periodontal condition and to verify the need for performing other treatments before proceeding with the teeth whitening.
- 2. Oral Hygiene:** Scaling and removal of extrinsic pigmentation.
- 3. Whitening:** Outpatient treatment, through trays and whitening gel.
- 4. If necessary, replacement of previous restorations, crowns or bridges:** Crucial for uniformity in colour.