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TYPES OF OFFICE WHITENING PROCEDURES

1. In-Office Whitening. This process can be done in-office in one visit. The appointment takes about two to three hours. A protective shield is placed over the teeth to be bleached. This protects your gums from the bleach, which is very strong. In certain instances, a different type gum protection is used. Then the whitening product is applied and a special lamp will be used to activate the whitening product.

The advantages of in-office power whitening include our doing all the work for you and less overall time spent bleaching your teeth. The disadvantage is the normal inconvenience of any dental treatment such as having to keep your mouth open the day of the appointment.

2. Home Whitening. This process, which can be done anywhere (usually at home), involves wearing a custom-made whitening tray (looks like a thin, transparent night-guard) filled with a mild whitening solution. There are two acceptable methods for whitening.

I. Brush and floss teeth, apply whitening gel to tray and insert into mouth. Keep tray in approximately 2 hours and take out. Brush teeth again, clean out tray, apply new whitening gel and wear for another couple of hours. To prevent sensitivity with this method it is recommended not to exceed 2 treatments of bleaching in a 24 hour period.

II. Brush and floss teeth, apply whitening gel into tray and insert into mouth. You may wear the gel-filled tray 2 - 8 hours per day while sleeping.

The full effect of whitening should be seen between 2 to 6 weeks of bleaching per arch. We would like to check your progress once every two weeks during the period. The advantages of home whitening are you whiten when it is convenient for you and possibly costs less. The disadvantages include the bother of having to wear the tray and the entire results depend on your routine use.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Diet. When power whitening is done in-office, there are dietary and smoking restrictions for 24 hours to assure that nothing entering the mouth stains the newly whitened teeth. (See in-office whitening post-procedure page)

2. Wearing Your Whitening Tray. If you choose home whitening, it will only be effective if you conscientiously wear the whitening tray for the prescribed number of hours per day.

3. Communication. If you experience any severe discomfort or other problems, contact us immediately.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

1. Tooth Sensitivity. During the first 24 hours following whitening, many patients experience sensitivity. This sensitivity is usually mild if your teeth are not normally sensitive. With power bleaching, this sensitivity will usually subside in 1 - 2 days. With home whitening, it may be necessary for you to reduce the number of hours you are wearing the whitening tray or stop using it for a short time to resolve the sensitivity. We routinely recommend alternative use with fluoride gel.

However, if your teeth are normally sensitive, whitening may make your teeth much more sensitive for an extended period of time. Under these circumstances, you may choose to delay whitening until we are able to complete desensitization procedures.

If your teeth are sensitive after bleaching a mild analgesic such as Tylenol or Advil will usually be effective to make you more comfortable until your teeth return to normal.

2. Gum Irritation. Temporary inflammation of your gums can be caused by whitening. With power bleaching, this is the result of very small amounts of bleach leaking under the rubber dam or by the rubber dam itself. A burning sensation in your gums may also occur. This is a minor problem and will resolve itself in a few days.

With home whitening, irritation can result from using the whitening tray too many hours when you first start whitening or using the whitening tray too many hours in a row without a break. It may be necessary for you to reduce the number of hours you are wearing the whitening tray or stop using it for a short time to resolve these gum problems.

3. Sore Throat. If you overload a whitening tray with whitening gel, the excess can go down your throat and cause soreness. This soreness will also resolve in several days, assuming you spit out the excess gel instead of swallowing it.

4. Leaking Fillings or Cavities. Most whitening is indicated for the outside of the teeth (unless you already had a root canal). However, if you have any fillings that are leaking and allow the gel to get into the inside of the teeth, damage to the nerves of the teeth could result. In this case, the fillings need to be redone prior to the whitening. In addition, open cavities can also allow whitening gel to reach the nerves of the teeth. They should also be filled before whitening.

5. Cervical Abrasion/Erosion. These conditions affect the roots of the teeth when gums recede. They are the grooves, notches, or depressions where the teeth meet the gums that look darker than the rest of the teeth. They look

darker because there is no enamel in these areas. Even if these areas are not sensitive, whitening can potentially penetrate the teeth and damage the nerves. These areas should not be bleached, but should be filled after the bleaching is completed.

6. Root Resorption. This is a condition where the root of a tooth starts to dissolve, either from the inside or outside. Although the cause of the resorption has not been determined, studies have shown that its incidence is higher in teeth that have had a root canal and are then whitened internally.

7. Effect On Fillings. Even though open cavities should be filled or badly leaking fillings should be refilled prior to whitening, home whitening can cause tooth-colored fillings to become softer and may make them more susceptible to staining. Therefore, you should be prepared to have any fillings in your front teeth replaced after whitening. In addition, since whitening will normally lighten teeth, but not fillings, you may need to have your fillings replaced anyway, so that they will match your newly whitened teeth.

COMPLETION OF TREATMENT

1. Level of Lightening. There is no totally reliable way to predict how light the teeth will whiten. With power bleaching, two to five sessions are usually necessary to significantly whiten your teeth. With home whitening, three to four weeks of wearing the whitening tray daily for 2 - 8 hours will give you much lighter teeth. Additional whitening may provide slightly more whitening effect but increased side effects may occur. We do not recommend home whitening for any longer than four weeks.

2. Relapse. Following the completion of whitening, there may be a gradual relapse of the teeth back to their original color. To reverse this relapse, a touchup treatment may be necessary after a year with home whitening, you may choose to wear your whitening tray once a month to keep relapse from occurring at all.

I have read and understand the preceding. The above information has been explained to me and I have had the opportunity to ask questions. I consent to this treatment.

(Patient signature)

(Print name)

(Witness signature)

(Print name)

(Date)