

## **Teeth Whitening**

### **What is teeth whitening?**

Teeth whitening is a procedure to lighten the color of discolored or stained teeth.

### **Who can benefit from having teeth whitening?**

Smoking, drinking tea, coffee and wine, decay and aging are all contributing factors to staining and discoloration. Teeth whitening can rectify these problems, and boost an individual's self-confidence by giving them a brighter smile.

### **Procedure**

Internal and external bleaching are the two main methods of teeth whitening.

- ✓ **Internal bleaching** - Internal bleaching is where the bleaching agent is placed inside the tooth. Firstly, the roots of the teeth are prepared by filling them with rubber, and the bleach inserted into holes that are drilled into the teeth (this may be over two separate treatments). Temporary fillings are then fitted. On your return to the dentist, the fillings are removed and the bleach taken out. The remaining holes are then filled using a natural colored filling to match the new tooth color.
- ✓ **External bleaching** - External bleaching means that the bleaching product is placed on the outside of the tooth. This can be done at home, at the dentist or as a combination of the two. If you choose to use home bleaching, you will need to visit your dentist who will take a mould of your teeth. This is to create two rubber trays that will sit flush around the teeth. Once home, these trays are then filled with the bleaching product and should be left in for a few hours at a time to achieve the desired color. If you choose for your dentist to perform the teeth whitening procedure, a bleaching agent is painted onto the teeth and a bright light shined intensely at them. Sometimes a rubber seal may be placed around the gums to protect them from the light.

### **Results**

The whiteness of your teeth will depend on how discolored they were initially, and whether you continue to smoke, and eat and drink color staining products. Results can also depend on the type of procedure used, and can last anything from a few months to a few years.

### **Risks**

There is a small risk that the light or bleaching agent used can reach the gums and cause a reaction. Teeth may also become more sensitive following the teeth whitening procedure.