

Henderson Family Dentistry At-Home Whitening Instructions

Congratulations on your decision to brighten your smile! Bleaching is an excellent method to remove old stains from tobacco, tea, and coffee or simply to make dull-looking teeth even brighter. The smile is the focal point of attention so it makes sense to make it look its best! Custom-fabricated trays are the best value in bleaching with the most predictable results.

Pre-Bleaching Instructions:

Brush and floss prior to bleaching your teeth. The whitening gel is most effective with clean teeth. Next, make sure your tray is comfortable with no sharp or rough edges. If so, simply trim with sharp scissors where you find the problem. No matter how well we inspect the tray; there is an occasional rough spot that may be undetectable until you wear them.

Filling your trays: Make sure your bleaching trays are clean and dry before applying the gel. Moisture reduces the efficiency of the whitening gel and slows down the whitening process. When you apply the gel into the trays, be sure not to fill the trays. You should only be concerned with bleaching the outer surface of your teeth. Load the gel into the inside of the tray by starting at the depth of the tooth and squirting a thin line up the front surface. Do not spread the bleach around. Recap the syringe for the next treatment until empty. One syringe of bleaching agent should be enough to fill a single tray approximately 6 or more times. If gums are sensitive to the bleaching agent, apply a thin layer of petroleum jelly to the gums adjacent to the teeth that are being bleached. It is usually not necessary to bleach the very back molars, as they are not seen when you smile. Check your natural smile in the mirror to see which teeth show and you need only to fill the corresponding teeth in the trays. If you have small teeth, use a smaller gel drop. Conversely, if you have larger teeth, use a slightly larger drop.

Application Instructions: Dry your cleaned teeth as best as you can with a gauze, rag or paper towel. Place the bleaching trays firmly over the teeth. While holding the trays firmly against the biting surface of your teeth with one hand, use the other hand to wipe the excess gel, which seeps out of the trays and onto your gums, with a damp Q-tip or tissue. If you feel excessive burning of the gums, remove the trays and rinse your mouth with water. You probably overfilled the trays. Try again with less gel. It does not take very much gel at all to attain adequate bleaching. You may see a "bubbling" action within your trays while wearing them.

Wear Time: It is a good idea to start with 30-45 minutes and slowly increase the wearing time every couple of days. If teeth are sensitive, skip a day or two between bleaching treatments. Do not eat, drink or smoke with trays in the mouth. Results can be seen in as few as 2-3 treatments, depending on severity of stain/discoloration prior to treatment.

Sensitivity: A small percentage of patients experience sensitivity, or discomfort of the gums, lips, throat, or tongue. Mild sensitivity, especially to hot and cold, is expected during treatment, and for up to 1 week after the last treatment. Should any of these symptoms persist more than 5-7 days and/or progressively worsen, call our office. These effects will usually subside within 1-3 days after treatment is discontinued. For sensitivity, do some of the following: skip a night/day or two of bleaching; bleach for less time and then gradually increase; and/or alternate wearing a tray filled with fluoride toothpaste in one time period and bleaching material the next. You may try and change your bleaching gel percentage; we have 10%, 15%, and 20% available.

Cleaning, Care, and Storage: After each bleaching session, remove trays and rinse well with cold water using a soft toothbrush and leave out to dry. Hot water can distort the trays. Brush any remaining gel from your teeth and floss as normal. If cold water is sensitive while brushing, use lukewarm water. Trays may be stored in a protective case (any plastic container with a lid will work). Trays must be completely dry before storage. Keep your trays and bleach secure from children and pets. Store excess bleach in the fridge. Do not freeze bleach! When storing unused gel, replace nozzle with the original twist off plastic cap to help ensure product efficacy. Place tip on syringe nozzle after each use to avoid leakage.

Important Points:

- Citrus fruits & acidic foods; tomatoes, can increase sensitivity.
- Avoid these while bleaching: tobacco, coffee, colas, red wines, grape juice, tomato sauce. Since these things can re-stain your teeth.
- The area of the tooth closest to the gums is naturally darker than the biting edges. This area may take longer to lighten and may not ever be as light as the biting edge
- Dental materials in the mouth (Crowns/fillings/veneers) will not whiten. Lightening the surrounding teeth may cause existing restorations to appear darker.
- Keep your trays even if you think you are done bleaching. They may still fit, and be able to be used in the future for additional bleaching.
- Keep your trays in a safe place away from dogs and cats because they have a tendency to chew them.
- Do not expose the trays to heat or sunlight. This may distort them and make them un-wearable.
- **Do not use treatment while pregnant or lactating.**
- Do not use any household or other whitening products to whiten your teeth.

Additional whitening gel refill syringes may be purchased at Henderson Family Dentistry (903-657-3139). Always call our office if you have any additional questions.