

CENTURY ORTHODONTICS

OUR THIRD CENTURY OF ORTHODONTIC EXCELLENCE

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Tooth Bleaching

*S*traight teeth are the most important part of a great smile ... but not everything! Today people expect whiter teeth than Mother Nature may have given them. For this reason many of our patients ask us after about the possibility of “whitening“ their teeth either during or at the end of treatment (Bleaching supervised at our office must be started no latter than the day braces are removed.)

What is bleaching?

Bleaching is a process that lightens the teeth and also can minimize the discoloration of stains. The active ingredient in the bleaching gel is a type of peroxide. When this material comes in contact with the teeth it releases oxygen, which penetrate into the teeth (even under braces) and bleaches out discolorations and stains

What causes tooth discoloration?

There are many causes. The most common cause is the build up of stains from the things we eat and drink. Trauma to a tooth can also darken it. Some drugs like tetracycline can effect the tooth formation and discolor it. White “birthmarks” are also common and are due to abnormal enamel formation. There are also white chalky marks, which result from poor oral hygiene and ingestion of excessively acidic food and drink (lemons, soft drinks, etc.)

Is bleaching right for me?

Bleaching works well to minimize the external stains and some white marks. Some improvement can be expected on teeth that have been stained due to drugs, but total whitening of the teeth is unlikely. Teeth that have been traumatized also do not respond well to external bleaching. These teeth need to be bleached internally after a root canal treatment is performed or covered with veneers. The white chalky marks caused by poor oral hygiene will often turn whiter if they are bleached. They do, however, tend to fade over time as they remineralize. For especially bad areas, your dentist can remove the damaged enamel and place a tooth colored filling material.

Does this procedure damage the teeth?

No. Some gum irritation is occasionally noticed, however. Sensitivity is also possible but will go away when use of the material is discontinued.

What does it cost?

For patients in active treatment we do not charge for bleaching other than the cost of bleaching trays (currently\$100) and the cost of the bleach (currently \$10). Patients wearing clear retainers may use these instead of bleaching trays