



After Care – At-Home Tooth Whitening

While some people choose in-office Zoom!® tooth whitening, others opt for the at-home convenience of at-home tooth whitening gels to enhance the shiny, white appearance of their teeth. While using an at-home tooth whitening system for just a week will give you noticeably whiter teeth—an average of five shades lighter—you do need to use it properly to avoid serious tooth sensitivity and achieve the results you desire.

You may also use whitening gel at home if you have had in-office Zoom! tooth whitening; after in-office whitening, we provide you with custom trays for touching up your teeth if you notice they are not as bright as you'd like. You can use the trays for several days in a row, every four to six months. (We provide one tube of touch up gel, and you may purchase additional gel at our office.)

At-Home Bleaching Instructions:

1. **Always brush and floss your teeth before using your whitening trays** so that the bleaching gel has a clean surface to work on.
2. **Put the gel on the front, or “smile-side” of the interior of the tray.** Use a small drop or thin ribbon of the gel...not too much!
3. **Place the tray in your mouth;** the tray should feel extremely tight, almost as if it's been vacuumed to your teeth.
4. **Wear the tray for 30 minutes to 2 hours every night** until the gel is all gone or your teeth are as white as you want them.
5. **Do not eat, drink, or smoke while your bleaching trays are in your mouth!** If you do, you may stain your teeth more.
6. **After removing the tray, brush your teeth well** to remove the gel from your teeth.
7. **Clean the tray by brushing it with a toothbrush and water,** then store the tray in its container.



Important Notes:

- **A small drop or very thin ribbon of whitening gel in your trays is enough**—if the solution oozes out, you've used too much!
- **Do not be alarmed if you see white spots on your teeth** after you take out the whitening trays. Your teeth are dehydrated after you use the whitening trays, but after an hour or so, they will return to a normal tooth color.
- **If you experience sensitivity, try using your bleaching trays every other night** (instead of every night) or call us to discuss other ways to treat sensitivity.
- While you are following a whitening system at home, **do your best to avoid foods and drinks that will likely stain your teeth:**
 - coffee and tea
 - colas
 - red wine
 - berry fillings in pies or other baked goods
 - tobacco products
- **Be sure to floss daily and brush with an anti-sensitivity toothpaste, and clean your tongue carefully at least twice each day.**

If You Experience Tooth Sensitivity

Our at-home whitening products cause much less sensitivity than “old school” at-home whitening products. However, even with the new system, temporary tooth sensitivity can be a common side effect. Some people experience a sharp, electric-shock feeling—a “zing”—from time to time, while others find that they are extremely sensitive to hot or cold foods and drinks. Over-the-counter pain relievers containing ibuprofen or acetaminophen may reduce any pain or sensitivity you feel. Using a toothpaste for sensitive teeth may be helpful, as well.

If sensitivity or discomfort persists beyond two to three days after you complete the whitening process, and the anti-sensitivity measures above don't seem to be helping alleviate it, please give us a call. We may need to check your teeth and gums for any new problems or prescribe a lower concentration of the whitening solution to help reduce and/or eliminate your sensitivity.

Reminders:

- **Avoid staining foods and drinks** while you are using the at-home whitening system.
- **Take over-the-counter pain relievers** if you experience tooth pain or sensitivity while you're using the system.
- **Don't use too much solution!** A very thin strip or drop in each tray is enough.

