

White teeth are only two weeks away

LISA CARTWRIGHT
Features

People noticed the difference right away. Over the course of a couple of weeks, my yellowed teeth were getting whiter. By the end of my two-week treatment with WhiteNight — a bleaching system that uses a custom-fitted tray and carbamide peroxide gel — people would stop

me in mid-sentence to tell me how white my teeth were.

WhiteNight has been on the market for some time and works best for getting rid of yellow to brown stains, said Dr. Theresa Bourke, a dentist at Unionville Gate Family Dentists.

"It works really well on aging, coffee, drinking and smoking stains."

HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

The Process

The entire process is easy and painfree.

After an initial examination (to see where the stains are coming from), your dentist will remove external stains and discuss how white you want your teeth to be by the end of the session.

Your dentist will then make molds of your teeth. The molds will be used to make thin plastic trays that you wear over your teeth at night.

Every night, you put a small amount of gel in the trays and place the trays over your teeth.

"What happens is the chemical breaks down in contact with saliva and releases oxygen.

"The oxygen breaks down the bonds of the stains in to a smaller, lighter colour substance that can be washed away," said

Bourke.

With the bleaching, some people will experience tooth sensitivity.

For me, the first couple of mornings it felt like someone punched me in the mouth. That feeling went away in about 10 minutes after taking the tray off.

And once the two weeks are up, teeth will remain white from three to four years.

If the sensitive feeling doesn't go away, Bourke suggested people

wear the tray for either short periods of time or for alternative nights.

The treatment will take longer (anywhere from four to six months), but sensitive teeth won't be a problem.

Most people, though, can wear the tray nightly and be finished with the treatment — with great results — between seven days and two weeks.

"The results vary. There is always some improvement. Twenty-five per cent would say

they had excellent results, 50 per cent said they had good results and 25 per cent had a little change.

"It depends on how bad (the staining) is and what they expect. Usually it is enough of an improvement that people will be happy."

And once the two weeks are up, teeth will remain white from three to four years, she said.

People who smoke and drink red wine will see the stains reappear faster, but Bourke said with good oral hygiene and a touchup every once in a while, people can keep their teeth looking white.

"Everybody owns their own teeth, therefore they own the right to determine how white they want their teeth," said Greg Anderson, the president of Specialty Medco and the Canadian distributor of NightWhite.

Anderson said people with habits that stain the teeth may want to touch up every four to five months, others will only do it once a year.

Teeth whitening "is effective, it's safe and it's a simple way to obtain a dramatic change in your appearance," said Bourke.

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**Cost of product varies
from one dentist to another**

The cost of NightWhite varies from one dentist to another. Unionville Gate Family Dentists charges \$269, but the system can go up to \$500.

The system includes the initial visit, the custom-fitting of the trays, checkups during the bleaching stage and the bleaching system itself (this includes a top and bot-

tom tray and a case to put them in as well as six vials of gel).

In the two weeks I used the system, I only used three vials.

The gel doesn't have to be refrigerated and can last up to three years after it is opened.

The gel comes in two flavours — peppermint and wild cherry.

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