



## Patient Information Leaflet

# Vital Bleaching

Cork University Dental  
School & Hospital



This leaflet has been designed to explain vital bleaching and it contains answers to many of the commonly asked questions. If you have any other questions that the leaflet does not answer or you would like further explanation please ask us.

### **Why and when do I need vital tooth bleaching?**

Vital bleaching is an elective procedure which is undertaken to brighten the appearance of your teeth. Bleaching may reduce the discolouration of the teeth.

### **Is vital tooth bleaching always feasible?**

Before having vital bleaching your mouth must be disease free. Where dental disease is present, this will need to be treated before any bleaching can be done. In some cases, the shade change may not be completely satisfactory and further treatment may be required to mask any discolouration which remains after bleaching.

### **What is involved in vital tooth bleaching?**

Impressions of your mouth will be taken at the first visit so that the laboratory can make customised plastic trays that will hold the bleaching agent.

The trays will be checked for fit at the second visit and if satisfactory you will be given these, along with the bleaching agent, to take home - with thorough instructions for use. You will be instructed to place the bleaching agent into the wells within the clear plastic trays and to wear these at night, initially for a two week period.

You will then be reviewed to assess the progress of treatment. Further application of the bleaching agent may be required depending on the individual case.

### **Will I experience pain during treatment?**

Pain is not normally encountered with vital bleaching, however sensitivity is common.

If your teeth become very sensitive you can apply the bleach every other night and place sensitivity toothpaste in the tray on the alternate night. Alternatively, stop using the bleaching agent and contact us.

### **How long does the treatment usually take?**

The treatment time varies in individual situations but it is likely to take a number of weeks.

### **What are the risks associated with vital tooth bleaching?**

This is a relatively low-risk procedure, however, under rare circumstances the following may happen;

1. Dental sensitivity
2. Chemical burns of the soft tissues
3. Root resorption - this refers to the “eating away” of the root structure by the body’s defense mechanisms because the root is recognised as foreign. This is more likely to occur with non-vital bleaching.

### **How successful is the treatment?**

As mentioned previously, success of vital bleaching depends on the cause, extent and duration of discolouration. The colour change after bleaching may not be stable; re-bleaching may be required, sometimes after one to two years.

**This leaflet is available online at <http://www.ucc.ie/en/dentalschool/patients/>**