



Patient Information Leaflet
Non Vital Bleaching
Cork University Dental
School & Hospital



This leaflet has been designed to explain what non-vital tooth bleaching is and it contains answers to many frequently asked questions. If you have any other questions that the leaflet does not answer, or if you would like further information, please ask us.

Why and when do I need non-vital internal tooth bleaching?

Teeth that have been traumatised, have already had root canal treatment or require root canal treatment may become discoloured. The discolouration may range from a mild yellowish hue through a reddish hue to the other extreme of a greyish hue. Internal bleaching provides a means of reducing the discolouration of the tooth.

Is non-vital internal tooth bleaching always feasible?

Non-vital internal tooth bleaching is not always feasible but the success depends on the cause, extent and duration of discolouration, as well as the presence of existing restorations. In some cases, a composite or porcelain veneer may be required to mask discolouration which remains after bleaching.

What is involved in non-vital internal tooth bleaching?

The treatment is carried out by isolating the tooth using a rubber sheet (a rubber dam) so that the bleaching agents do not come into contact with the soft tissues and saliva does not leak into the tooth. A cavity is prepared in the back of the tooth and the bleaching agent is applied. The most popular approach is to leave a paste of bleaching agent sealed within the tooth for one week. The paste is then removed and the tooth restored if the colour is satisfactory. Alternatively, the bleaching may be tried for another week. This may be repeated again if the resolution is only partial.

Will I experience pain during treatment?

The treatment is normally a painless procedure. Local anaesthetic may sometimes be given to make this treatment comfortable.

How long does the treatment usually take?

Non-vital internal bleaching may require 3-4 appointments.

What are the risks associated with non-vital internal tooth bleaching?

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

1. Chemical burns of the soft tissues
2. Root resorption - this refers to the “eating away” of the root structure by the body’s defense mechanisms. This may lead to a need for surgical intervention or extraction of the tooth

How successful is the treatment?

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

What happens after my non-vital internal bleaching?

Following completion of the treatment, the tooth will be filled with a white filling.

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